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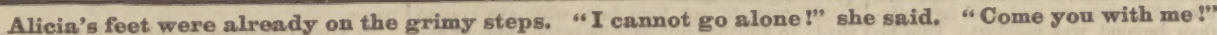
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 { One copy, one year, . . 3.00
 { Two copies, one year, . 5.00

No. 418

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

A Romance of Love and Honor.

CHAPTER IV.
THE CASTLE.



CHAPTER V

He flashed the light to and fro, till every portion of the room was brought into view.

"It was entirely empty!"

"He was not brought here," said the chief, angrily.

"He was brought here; I can swear to it," said one of the men; "to this very room."

"I saw him put in," added Hilda, "and the door fast locked outside."

"But, woman, you see for yourself he's not here," testily replied the chief.

"And he could not have gotten forth," added the dame, embarrassed what to think.

"Search the other rooms," thundered Kenneth, in a rage at the disappearance of the prisoner.

Not a trace of the seer could be found in any of the rooms. The wonder was great, and several avowed their belief that Mat was a wizard.

"How else could he go forth?" suggested Hilda. "Will never a window to put his head through?"

The confusion in the castle and around it left no time for conjecture or questioning. The soldiers were outside; and they had demanded admittance in the king's name.

Gregory, who was spokesman in the absence of Kenneth, responded by requiring to know what had brought them at that hour to invade the dwelling of a man who had given no cause for a show of violence against him.

The leading officer of the troops rode within speech of Gregory, who stood upon one of the balconies. He said he and his men had been summoned and sent to the assistance of the revenue men, who had reported the capture of their commander. He had been missing since before dusk, and was supposed to be held a prisoner in the castle. He must be instantly released, or the attack would be made to force an entrance and deliver the captive.

Kenneth came forward at this juncture, and loudly declared that no prisoner was held within the castle; and that no enemy should be admitted to search.

There was a stunning clamor of voices at this; the soldiers shouting that they did not believe him, and calling their comrades to the rescue; the adherents of Kenneth giving orders, and running to and fro in wild disorder. The chief's orders to bolt and barricade the entrances were obeyed, and preparations were hurriedly made to resist the attack. In vain some of the men urged that the soldiers be permitted to make the search and then retire; it was answered that they claimed the right also to quarter themselves all night, and make a search for smuggled stores on the morrow, perhaps to arrest the whole household as suspected participants. There was no limit to the freedom claimed by a body of soldiers in possession; and a man's own house was his stronghold.

In the midst of the wild disorder Hilda made her way to Kenneth, and laid hold of his arm. He turned quickly; the woman's face was white as death, and her lips trembled; she had some evil news to communicate. She gasped, almost breathless, in her master's ear:

"He is dying; he will be dead ere dawn; save yourself!"

"Speak plainly, woman; or else stand aside!" was the hasty response.

"The lad, Malcolm—he came from Mat, the seer—"

"What of him? Has the devil carried him off? Why came ye speak out?"

"The man who fell frae the cliff; Mat took him home. He is hurt to the death! 'Twill sune be known, if 'tis not already! Master, master, save yourself! Leave the castle the storm is 'bating; 'twill pull the house round, and fetch ye wi' the dawn; ye can hide in the cave! There is a vessel nigh the coast at anchor."

She poured forth her entreaties with frenzied earnestness; and Kenneth saw at once the danger in which he stood. His stubborn will, however forbade him to yield.

"I will not fly, nor hide, this night!" he cried, hoarsely. "I will hold the castle till dawn, and then baffle them! Where is Herrick?"

Hilda wrung her hands in terror and anguish. Better than life she loved her master, and to find him so foolishly tortured her.

"Herrick! I will find him! He may persuade ye, Sir Kenneth! Woe is me, he needs not words of mine!"

Turning he sped from the place in search of help, but staggered against the wall in horror at the next sound that met her ears.

With his own hands Kenneth lighted the fuse of the cannon on his ramparts. The roar shook the castle, and though no harm resulted among the besiegers, the formidable sound created a panic, showing that their purpose would not be accomplished without bloodshed and loss of life. The silence that ensued was speedily followed by greater activity and a wilder uproar than ever among both the hostile parties.

Return ye to the terrified Alicia. She heard the clamor, the shouting, and the dire confusion, wilder than the storm and the roar of the sea. It seemed as if the old castle were tumbling about her ears. She had sunk on her knees, and held her clasped hands toward Herrick in agonized supplication. He stood irresolute and agitated by conflicting emotions. He knew his duty called him to share the labor and peril of his father and kinsmen, rash and misguided as he deemed them. Yet how could he leave the fair girl thus imploring his help? Had not his father, too, committed her to his charge?

"You will save me, Herrick?" entreated the maiden.

"What can I do?" stammered the youth.

"Take me home! Oh, take me to my father! I was mad to leave home! I was headstrong. Oh, Herrick, take me back, and I will bless your name forever!"

Turning abruptly, the young man went to the door. He found it fastened on the outside. He beat violently upon it, and shouted the names of several retainers.

A voice answered him without:

"The castle is attacked by soldiers. Every man is wanted on the ramparts!"

"Undo the door! Which of you dared bolt me in! Call Hilda. Send Hilda hither!" he shouted.

"Oh, Herrick, take me away! I shall die if I stay here!" shrieked the poor girl, more and more alarmed every instant.

Herrick took her hand and led her to the extreme end of the hall. There stood a massive cask full of liquor; from which at meals the men were accustomed to draw full flagons.

With a giant's strength the young man hurled this cask, larger and heavier than a hoghead, on one side. It had stood directly over a trap-door. Herrick stooped and pulling an iron ring lifted this, disclosing a narrow flight of stone steps. A rush of cold damp air came from the opening.

"Behold the secret passage," he said. "It leads by a winding way to a door that opens outside the walls. You can go that way; take this torch to guide your steps. You will find the outer door unbarred; it is always kept so. When you are outside nothing will hinder your flight."

He put the torch into Alicia's hand; he led her to the steps down which she was to go. Alicia looked up at him. He was struggling violently with emotion; his right hand was clenched; his teeth were set as in terrible determination.

"And you—what will you do?" asked the girl.

"I! Oh, I will shut the trap-door, and replace the cask to conceal your flight. Then I will batter down your door, and go out to help my kinsmen, and die in defense of the castle."

Alicia's feet were already on the grimy steps of the passage. She slithered violently.

"I cannot go alone!" she said. "Come you with me!"

"How can I leave the castle when foes are besieging it?"

"Your father put me in your care, and locked the door. He does not want you. He would send, if he did. I dare not go alone! Come, Herrick—my cousin—come!"

"What can harm you, alone? The storm is

over; the country is quiet. All the fighting-men are here."

"I should not know the way to my home, and it is far!" moaned the girl, sobbing in terror.

"At the nearest farm-house you will find shelter, rest, and a guide and horse when you list to pursue the journey. Here is money; all the bores are easily bribed."

He offered a purse, which the girl refused to take.

"If you will not go with me," she murmured, "I shall die in this underground passage! It frightens me but to look at it! I shall never come forth alive! And you will perish, too, Herrick! You must come with me!"

She stood on the topmost step and clasped his arm with her white hand, looking beseechingly in his face.

"Do you care for me, Alicia?" he asked, earnestly.

"Surely I do," she answered. "You are my only friend, Herrick!"

"What will you do for me, Alicia, if for your sake I desert my father in his hour of need?"

"Take me to my father, and he will send you help. He will serve you in all things."

"What will you do for me?"

"I will bless you. Oh, Herrick! I will call you my deliverer!"

"Will you love me, Alicia?"

"I do love you, cousin."

"But not as I love you! You have long known—yes, you must have known—how madly I worship you! I would give the world, my life—my honor even—to call you mine! Do not start; my father sent to capture you for the purpose of making you my wife, ay, tonight! But I would have no constraint; you shall be free to choose. I might compel you to wed me, but I love you too well for that, Alicia!"

"Oh, Herrick! you have a noble soul!"

"Hear me now," cried the young man, impetuously. "I am ready to go with you, to forsake all; to brand myself as a traitor; to take you to your father's house! But you must promise to be my wife! Will you promise that, Alicia?"

"Herrick, you have too grand a soul to profit by my sore strait! Be generous—I implore you!"

"Then you love me not! You scorn my suit, proud girl!"

"I do not scorn—I honor you. I am lost unless you save me! I appeal to your mercy."

"Shall I save you for another suit?"

His eyes glared; his lips were drawn; his face was white as death.

"You must answer me before I stir, girl," he gasped, releasing his arm from her feeble hold. You want me to save you—that you may wed another?"

"Oh, no, no, no! Herrick!"

"Will you swear to marry me?"

"Oh, I cannot!"

"Will you swear to marry no one else?"

"Mercy, mercy, Herrick!"

"By my ancestors, you shall swear, or I leave you to perish! Hark to those wild shouts! Our men have triumphed! They will be in here presently! What will become of you?"

"Save me! Save me!"

"Will you swear to marry no man unless I give you leave?"

"I will! I will!"

"Swear then! by this sword! No, by your hopes of heaven!"

"I swear!" repeated the affrighted girl, falling on her knees.

"I have your oath!" cried Herrick, exultingly. "You shall wed me, or no man! Now come!"

He threw one arm around her waist. The cries without were redoubled; but unheeding them, he lifted her down the steps, closed the trap-door after them and bolted it on the lower side.

Carrying the torch in one hand, and clasping the almost-fainting maiden firmly with the other, he gained the passage, and sped on swiftly, till the door beyond was reached. There he stood open with some exertion of strength, and they stood in the open air, outside.

A terrible scene burst on Herrick's sight, amid the clamor and shouting. Flames were rushing from the upper windows of the castle.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 417.)

ONE CONSTANT FRIEND.

BY WOOD B. SCRIBBLER.

In fancied friends and dreaded foes,
I've disappointments found,
So true were these, so false were those,
That trust with doubts abound.

But true to himself,
Ever true to himself,
And he's a truth itself to me;
Do seek—much elate,
To better my state,
His selfish form I see.

Ambition's fire may brightly burn,
Or picture visions fast;
Or, lowly soaring, fancy seek
For friends and foes at last.

But the same little sprite,
With spirits so light,
Whisks off the pleasure refined;
At a whisper from his wing
For the friend I would win,
A cool acquaintance I find.

This meddler in all my affairs
I name ill-luck, and begin
Anew the race with fleet despair,
Yet he is certain to win.

Disgraced at last,
With results of the past,
I turn from his withering wand
And seek words of due weight,
His misdeeds to relate,
Lo! here, he's guiding my hand.

Wife or Widow?

OR,

ETHELIND ERLE'S ENEMY.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "A GIRL'S HEART," "A DANGEROUS WOMAN," "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MRS. FAUNCE.

"Her face was pale, but very beautiful; her lips had a more delicate outline, and the tint was deeper. But her countenance was like the majestic angels."

For a season that strange, erratic woman, the mistress of Lorn, tasted of happiness in feverish draughts that were like nectar to her palate at one moment, and bitter as gall the next. Colonel Falkner was at her feet again, the blind, infatuated lover. He had once more fallen completely under the spell of her grace and beauty. The sinful and miserable past, which had been so darkly hinted at in the first interviews they held together, was never referred to now. He preferred to believe blindly and implicitly in her truth, perhaps; for he made no effort to sweep aside the curtain that hid so much that was dark and mysterious.

But Mrs. Faunce could not forget. The sword of Damocles hung suspended above her head, and whether she waked or slept, whether she rejoiced or sorrowed, she never for one moment lost sight of the fact that it was there, as real as reality, though she saw it not. And the consciousness murdered her peace, embittered her happiest moments, as was most natural, under the circumstances.

One day, when she sat musing in her own room, her graceful hands lying in her lap, her eyes bent upon the carpet, she was suddenly aroused from her reverie by the loud ringing of the door-bell.

"It is he—it is Philip," she murmured, a soft rose-flush stealing into her cheeks.

A few minutes later the room door opened and Joan Withers entered—alone. Mrs. Faunce could not repress a cry of disappointment.

"Where is he, Joan? Did he only send a message? Give it to me instantly."

The old woman looked white and scared. "Hush, my lady," she said, in a muffled voice. "It was not Colonel Falkner, but—the other one!"

"What other?"

"Raymond Challoner."

An exclamation of anger and terror broke from the lips of Mrs. Faunce, and she started impulsively to her full height, and stood there with both hands firmly clinched.

"My God!" she gasped, her face just audible. "Am I never to know rest or peace?"

"Of course I refused to admit him," said Joan. "But he bade me say to you that even a dozen rebuffs would not discourage him—that he should come again."

"Do you think an suspect—or is it mere idle curiosity that brings him here?"

"The latter, I fully believe," Joan answered, pitying her mistress's evident terror so much that she half unconsciously belied her real convictions.

"I wish I knew—I wish I knew," moaned Mrs. Faunce, falling back into her chair again, with a dreadful shiver.

The next day, at about the same hour, the bell again sent its imperative summons echoing through the house. But a longer interval elapsed before Joan appeared at the door of the apartment in which Mrs. Faunce sat, pallid with suspense and fear.

"It was he—Mr. Challoner! I know, I feel it!" exclaimed the wretched woman, without waiting for her servant to speak.

"Yes, my lady."

"He intends driving me to madness and desperation. But I will never see him—never!" Joan hastily advanced.

"He scribbled a few lines on this card, madam, and told me to deliver it immediately. Of course I could not refuse to take it."

The message was written in pencil, and ran thus:

"I have been dismissed from your door for the last time. When I come again to-morrow at this hour, you must admit me. I know you! I am not a man to be trifled with."

An hour later, when Colonel Falkner himself made his appearance at Lorn, he found Mrs. Faunce nervous and hysterical. She screamed at sight of him, and throwing herself helpless on his breast, clung to him in what seemed an agony of terror.

"What has happened?" he asked, in alarm.

"Are you ill?"

"Take me away," she shivered. "You have said that you love me. Prove it by helping me to fly from this hated spot."

"Be patient, Olympia," he said, trying to soothe her. "One of these days, as soon as everything is arranged, we will go."

"It must be now or never."

"It would necessitate a great pecuniary sacrifice were we to leave at once."

"What do I care for that?" she broke out, fiercely, with her hands clinched. "You shall not make me. And it would be wicked and sinful for you to weigh dollars and cents in the balance with my peace of mind."

He looked down at her with a strange glance in which there seemed to be a blending of love and shrinkings of disgust.

"It is not the loss in money matters that troubles me, and I might as well confess the truth," he said, a little coldly. "You know that my ward Ethelind is missing. I cannot bear to go away until I have heard some tidings of her."

Mrs. Faunce slipped quickly out of his arms and sat down. Her hands were now helplessly relaxed and trembled in her lap.

"You love that girl," she said, in a deep, shaken voice. "She has usurped my place in your heart. I have feared it sometimes—I know it now."

"Hush! you are talking wildly," he said, but his eyes fell beneath the searching gaze she sent quivering into them.

"If you do not love her, why are you so ready to sacrifice my happiness the moment she comes?"

"You misunderstand me, Olympia."

"Nay, I fear that I understand you only too well!"

Ethelind was entrusted to my care by her dying father. She has gone away friendless and alone. She may be penniless for aught I know—she certainly is suffering. Is it not natural that I should wish to be assured of her well-being before leaving this part of the country?"

His tone was still cold and reproachful. Mrs. Faunce felt her powerlessness to hold out against him. She suddenly leaned her head against his shoulder and burst into a wild storm of sobs.

"Forgive me, Philip. I did not wish to betray anything akin to jealousy. But I am miserable—so wretched to live. I feel myself sinking into a horrible abyss where I shall be beyond the reach of hope or mercy or pardon; and nobody, not even you, is willing to stretch forth a saving hand."

"What do you mean, Olympia?" he said, bending toward her with a touch of returning tenderness. "Why do you talk so strangely? Are you threatened by any new or immediate danger?"

"She dared not tell him."

"No one here has penetrated your secret," he went on, in his usual tone. "You might remain at Lorn half a lifetime and not a whisper arise to betray the story of the past. Remember how secluded is this place—how few in all the country have ever heard of you."

"The danger may be more imminent than you are aware of," she shivered. "It is impossible to tell. And the world would not judge me with your leniency. It has no faith in me. It would sooner adjudge me guilty than innocent."

"No one would dare breathe a word against you in my presence."

"Oh, Philip, Philip! Promise me that you will never forsake me."

"I do promise—but it is unnecessary. Our lives are too closely woven together ever to be divided again."

She was silent a moment or two, as if struggling with the emotions that had so nearly overcome her. At length she said, in a thrilling whisper:

"I am like one beset. A nameless horror is hovering over me. I feel as if evil spirits had hold of my soul, and were trying to wrench it from my body. Philip, unless you save me I am lost—lost to all eternity. Oh, be merciful! Let us fly this very night!"

"So soon?" he said, startled by her wildness and vehemence. Impossible. Try to be calm, Olympia. There is nothing to fear."

But she went on urging more vehemently than ever that such a course was her only salvation. They would seek some far-off sunny clime, she said, some lovely, romantic tale in a southern sea, where they could live and die together re- freed from the and the irksome trammels of a false civilization.

Colonel Falkner listened in a vague wonder to her beseeching words. But instead of drawing his heart closer to her they seemed to widen the distance between them. The glowing pictures she painted possessed little charm for him in the mood that had suddenly come over him. He experienced a sickening sensation of misery and disappointment, as if all the brightest hopes of his life had crumbled to ashes in his grasp, like Dead Sea fruit. Were the scales falling from his eyes? Or was this reaction only the natural effect of his better nature trying to reassert itself?

Mrs. Faunce, with a woman's subtle intuitions, divined at once the change in his mood. She became silent all at once, a spasm of agony over her face, and she sunk back in her chair trembling and pallid, as if she had resigned herself to a fate she was powerless to avert.

"You are not yourself to-day," said Colonel Falkner, looking at her curiously. "Something has happened to distress you, and you are keeping it from me."

"No, I am not myself," she said, wearily, utterly ignoring the words with which he had con-

cluded. "I believe I realize how a poor, doomed prisoner must feel the hour before the executioner comes."

She smiled very faintly, adding, before he could recover himself to reply:

"Perhaps we had better say adieu for the present. You can come again to-morrow—if you wish."

"I shall come very early, then; as early as you will admit me!" he exclaimed, struck by the misery expressed in every tone of her sobbing voice.

"No," she said firmly, "your visit to-morrow must be paid at a later hour than ever before. Do not come until the sun is down. I shall be busy until then."

She offered no further explanation of the request, but rose quickly and held out her hand. Colonel Falkner took it, held it rather longer than usual, and as if yielding to an irresistible impulse, bent down suddenly and touched his lips to the soft, cool palm.

"I hope to find you more cheerful when I come again," he said.

She bowed her head passively, making no other reply. But when he had gone out and shut the door, she sunk down on her knees, clasped both hands over her eyes, and burst out in subdued but hysterical crying.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DECREE OF FATE.

"The trait I'm fallen into my patience cannot bear! It frights my reason, warps my sense of virtue, Religion—changes me into a thing I look at with abhorring!"

—THE HUNCHBACK.

The next day, at the hour he had himself appointed, Raymond Challoner slowly approached Lorn, threading one of those grass-grown paths that led, with many a detour, through the neglected grounds.

He was very pale, but his face wore a grim, resolute expression, and it was with a firm step that he ascended the terrace and made his way to the gloomy, forbidding-looking portal. He looked like a man with a fixed, inflexible purpose in his mind.

His foot had scarcely touched the topmost step when the door opened, noiselessly, and Joan appeared, her usually imperturbable face strangely agitated. She spoke no word of greeting, but in utter silence beckoned him to enter.

"And so I am to be given the open sesame to this enchanted palace at last?" he said, with a mocking curl of the lip, as he crossed the threshold. "It is well."

"You would never enter with my consent," said Joan, fiercely. "But of course my mistress has her own pleasure. I am powerless to keep you out."

Again Raymond smiled derisively.

"One would imagine you had played the part of a quite long enough. Beauty and the Beast and Una and the Lion are worn out tales. They grow tiresome in process of time. No matter—I have gained my point. Pray conduct me at once to the presence of Mrs. Faunce."

The sneering emphasis with which he spoke that name sent a shudder through the woman's frame.

She suddenly grasped his arm.

"I can see that you are in no conciliatory mood," she said, dropping her voice to a whisper. "Be warned in time. My mistress is desperate already—do not drive her to madness. I make this plea for your sake as well as hers."

"Against what do you warn me?"

"Alas, I know not," replied Joan, in deep agitation, dropping her hand and shrinking from him. "My heart misgives me—that's all. The shameful past has been rising before my mind with strange vividness all the morning."

He made an impatient gesture.

"How is your mistress?" he asked, after a short pause.

"Calm—unnaturally calm. I would rather see her in any other mood. Oh, it was not well to admit you to this interview. I begged and pleaded with her, but she would not listen. No good will come of it—no good."

A low moan broke from her lips, but she seemed to recover herself after a moment, and pointing out to him a door lower down the passage, turned abruptly away, leaving him to go on by himself.

Raymond found Mrs. Faunce seated near an open window in a partially darkened room. She was dressed in black, some soft, filmy goods that emphasized the livid pallor of her face. There were bluish shadows round her mouth, and a purple line under her eyes that spoke of past conflict and suffering.

She sat with her cheek resting on her hand, but at the sound of the unclosing door she raised her head with a proud air that had something of defiance in it.

"You have come," she said, in a low monotonous voice. "I knew I could not evade you forever."

Raymond wondered at her calmness. She sat there like a marble woman, her glorious dark eyes meeting his unflinchingly. One fair rounded arm was now thrown carelessly across a small table at her elbow, on which stood a silver salver and a slender Venetian glass filled with some dark red liquid. She looked every inch a scattered queen. Before this happened the girl had recoiled and clutched at my arm with the softest little snivels of a hand you ever saw. One glance of her frightened eyes went straight to my heart.

"Oh, I beg pardon, but will you please go with me to the next square?"

"Think what confiding innocence must have prompted that appeal! It was flattering to fancy that my ingenuous countenance should have inspired her with such trust; I dare say it was the callow simplicity written there, aided by the diamond in my shirt-bosom, but no such thought occurred to me then. I went with her."

"She was so frightened, so thankful; it was like running a gant

to papa. Maroon took alarm when I suggested it. He did not approve of strangers; she might be wrong; she had never even told him of these street interviews, but at last she was persuaded reluctantly to give me his number, after extorting a promise that I would reveal myself to him, and I had the felicity of riding down town next day with the man whom I had already consecrated in my thoughts as my future father-in-law.

"If that conductor could but have known the conflicting emotions aroused in my mind by his frayed linen and shabby blouse! If he could have known the heroic resolution it required not to slip a V into his hand and refuse the change! I wished I had done it afterward. It might have brought about an explanation which would have enlightened me."

"After six weeks or so of this blissful experience, a chill of reserve stole over Maroon. Never mind the misery I endured. It came out at last that there was another sinner in the field, a man whom her father favored, who had already been a generous friend to them, who would cancel that fatal indebtedness at the price of her hand. All men are fools once in their lives, and I was too much infatuated to have a doubt of this fishy story. Imagine, if you can, the arguments I employed in having the promise of that pleasure and recompense transferred to me. I was a thousand times wiser about loose as it happened, and found no difficulty in presenting myself at the Moynarty apartments on the next Sunday morning with seven hundred in my pocket. It was on the programme that Maroon should present the money to her father, smoothing down the stubborn pride which might stand in the way of its acceptance, while I should take advantage of the first flush of his gratitude to plead my cause."

"The dear child was all in a flutter. She took the roll of bills I put in her hand and faced about as the door opened and a man scarcely older than I was entered."

"Here it is, Gustave. I hope you are satisfied. Now tell Mr. Garth why I cannot accept of the honor he would confer upon me."

"Because she is my wife and has been these two years," said he, putting his arm about her, while she had the grace to hide that fair, false face of hers upon his shoulder. "Maybe you'll believe me, Mont, when I tell you I never once thought of the seven hundred dollars I had thrown away. It was the hardest experience of my life to know that the witchery that girl had thrown around me was all a deceit and a snare."

"Maroon, I appealed to her: 'what reason or excuse have you for this? Must I go without any regard at all for the woman I believed you to be?'"

"She lifted her face with the very tearful, pleading look I had seen upon it a score of times."

"He made me do it. Pity me, think what my life must be, what my temptation was. 'She wrung her two little white hands together with a hopeless gesture, and upon my word, Mont, I can't think hardly of her to this day, though I made friends with the shabby conductor immediately after,' and for the rest, of course, that he had never heard of my siren. It won't seem like sacrilege will it, after that, to ask how your love affair came about?"

"My Maroon was companion to Mrs. West—your remember her!—almost like an adopted daughter in the early days of her life. Garth, and have the flavor of *le diable* which clings to your siren, taken away by as near an approach to the angelic as this earth affords us."

More than an ordinary friendship had existed between these two young men; therefore it was with more than ordinary curiosity and interest that Garth looked forward to meeting his friend's wife. The keen expectancy in his eyes changed to accusation and horror as the slight, little form arose before him, while the fair face blanched, and the smile and words of welcome from the past seemed to fade away. "This young wife! Then Heaven pity you, my friend. This woman is Maroon's daughter!"

Amaze struggling with indignation gave way in Tresdale's mind to a conviction of the truth. There are men whom pale or wrong reader fierce and dangerous. Tresdale was one of these.

"No lie," as he caught her wrist. "Were you that degraded thing?"

"I was."

The bare, unqualified admission, nothing more. Looking from one stern face to the other with hunted and desperate eyes, she felt how useless it would be to plead any extenuation of that past, and turned away with a mute gesture of despair.

One year of restless wandering, months passed amid the wildest scenes of the wide, wide West, where the colossal features of sublime Nature overtop and overwhelm the pigmy man, the scene of erratic travel extending all the way from the grand, gloomy pine forests of the North to the rolling Texas slopes, a year from the time Tresdale and Garth had departed in company, the former returned alone.

Garth was settled in a rising Western town, devoting himself to his profession, with the certainty of growing into greatness, but his bosom friend had come home to die.

There was no doubt of that in the mind of any one who looked into his ghastly, thin visage or noted how the strong nerves of the man had deserted him. Few had the opportunity of doing so. He shut himself up in his own house, shunned society, and wasted perceptibly day by day.

When his old housekeeper came to announce that she was about to leave him for a home with her son, adding that she had found a person to fill her place, provided he approved her choice, he only turned from her irritably:

"See for yourself that she is tidy and quiet, and tell her to let me alone."

Not a word of regret at parting from the faithful woman who had been like a mother to him, yet Tresdale had been twice married.

Quarterly another of the most eminent physicians of the day waited upon him. He never sent for them; he answered their questions listlessly, threw their prescriptions into the fire, and summoned the new director of his household affairs.

"Mrs. Gray, don't let another doctor inside the door. Who is it sends them to worry me to death faster than I am going, I wonder? A glass of water before you go if you please."

She brought it silently and watched him drop a portion from a vial of colorless liquid which he always carried in his breast-pocket. Suddenly a shapely hand, brown and small, drew the glass out of his reach.

"I am afraid you take that more than is good for you. Let me try to quiet you by reading instead."

He had never noticed his housekeeper particularly before. Now, too weak to resist, he lay back and gazed at her. An elderly woman with smooth white hair lying under a square of lace, with a dark face, and eyes that drooped habitually under sweeping black lashes. Seemed like Marion there, and yet it seemed Marion's very voice which, meant to lull him into repose, started him instead to intense excitement.

Next moment things surged before his sight, his face changed to a purpled hue, the veins in his neck stood out dark and turgid. It was not his first attack of what one of his physicians had called apoplexy of the nerves.

Despite his command, another doctor found his way to his bedside—a bluff, hearty old man—who had held a long consultation with Mrs. Gray before he was admitted to the patient.

"Well, my lad, what is the matter with you? Heart-disease? Nonsense; you've no more heart-disease than I have. I'll tell you what it is, fast enough. Did you ever hear of Chloasma?"

"No, never," but Tresdale awoke to an interest he had not manifested heretofore.

"Now, listen. Is not this your daily routine? You are nervous and depressed, and what do you do—take chloroform. You have a burning in your head, brain confused, galloping pulse, and you take chloroform. Or you are chilled, pulse down to a mere thread, heart scarcely in motion, and you take chloroform. I'm not gifted with

second-sight, but that excellent creature, your housekeeper, has divined the cause of this mysterious illness of yours, and in every symptom I recognize the result of chloroform. You are adding by every dose to the fire which is already consuming you. Let the stuff alone, and you will be a well man in six months' time."

Tresdale protested. "It is my friend, doctor. It has given me the only rest I have known for a year."

"Tell me about it."

"I had met with a loss. I was miserable and sleepless, but chloroform waded me into dreamless oblivion; it even dulled my anguish of mind."

"By sapping your natural affections, leaving you incapable of any emotions save selfishness, irresponsibility and despair. Chloroform is your tyrant and you are its slave—you will very soon be its victim, mark my words, unless you fling your bottle after the prescriptions which you sent to the fittest place they could go, considering your case."

Do any of you know what a herculean task breaking such a habit implies!

Months afterward Tresdale looked back upon that darkened page of his life's history, and shuddering, wondered at the straits to which he had been reduced. Like clouded dreams came the recollection of delirious agony and suffering beyond the power of words to tell before nature triumphed over the injurious effects of the insidious drug he had so ignorantly taken; but, through them all, the knowledge of tender care, of cool hands and pitiful eyes, of a will which strengthened his when he might have given up the battle—which willed him back to life.

Then, one day, when all danger was past, Mrs. Gray appeared before him strangely transformed. The dark complexion was washed away, the gray front and lace head-gear had been removed, and behold! it was Marion's matchless face and golden braids that were bowed before him.

Kneeling, she spoke:

"Hear me, then, judge me if you will. What your friend told you was true, but it was not all the truth. Gustave was my brother. His false claim was made to relieve me from the importunities of a lover whose generosity had been shamefully abused. What a wretch I must seem to you, and yet I loathed the life I was forced to lead. My father and brother had brought me up to play my part in the plots they formed, and so well tutored was I in the habit of obedience—woe to me had I disobeyed—that the question of right or wrong was scarcely considered."

Garth's love tempted me as a means of escape from them, but I put the temptation from me. I did not love him and I would not do him such a wrong, and I was thankful afterward when other release came. My father died in a cell, and my brother was sentenced to the State's Prison. For the first time I was free to follow my better aspirations, and then, Mont, I began my life anew. I took another name, found honest employment, warm friends, and later—*you*. Oh, forgive me that I dared to believe I was done with the past and linked my life with yours."

Was he weak and unmanly that he forgave her? Remember, he had the picture in his mind of grim death himself and snatched away his victim. Was he infatuated when he took her back with a firm faith in her true repentance of those sins for which she was the least responsible? Then it was an infatuation so fraught with good works, so crowned by noble results, so accompanied by heart-peace, that we may well envy it and him.

THOUGHTS.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

Ever backward to the past,
Thoughts are flying thick and fast,
Thoughts that fill the eyes with tears,
And the thoughts of pleasant years!
Ever to the future valled
Golden ships of thought have sailed;
Ever to the future valled
Loving fingers at the helms.
Dear to us the thoughts that fly
Ever upward to the sky
Noble thoughts that never die!

Silver Star, THE BOY KNIGHT; OR, The Mystery of Osman, the Outlaw.

A PRAIRIE ROMANCE.

BY OLL COMBES.

CHAPTER XXIII.

KIT TAKES THE COMPASS.

OUR friends took dinner in the grove, then mounting they set off upon the trail of the surveying party.

Old Kit, having the advantage of a horse, felt rejoiced at leaving his wife behind; but, hardly had he spoken his mock farewell, ere Sabina laid a sorry-looking old mule from a thicket hard by, and mounting it came on and joined the party, a smile of triumph beaming upon her face.

"Please gracious, Kit Columbus Bandy, you've dodged me for the last time," the old woman exclaimed, pounding her mule with her umbrella.

"Oh, horn of Joshua!" groaned Kit, looking the sadness he could not express.

A compromise was effected between the husband and wife, for the time being, and all rode along harmoniously.

The trail of the surveyors was plain, the wheels of their wagons making a deep impression in the soil. They forded the White Earth and passing from among the wooded hills and bluffs entered the open prairie. Here the trail was more difficult to follow. The autumnal fires had not visited this part of the country, and a coat of thick dry grass covered the plain.

The keen eye of Silver Star, accustomed to the trail, was called into play, and so the party moved on, and about the middle of the afternoon the surveyors were discovered, heading northward, about a mile away.

Silver Star and Old Kit deployed themselves to the right to observe the movements of the party. They rode around—keeping in the low grounds—until they had gained a point where they could command a fair view of the whole corps of surveyors. The wagon was being drawn by four good mules, and followed by an escort of some ten mounted men. In advance was a man carrying a long pole with a red flag, and several shorter ones with white flags. Far behind were two men, and between these and the wagon were two more—all mounted but the last two.

"Oh-ho!" exclaimed Kit, after he had taken a look at the party through Silver Star's glass. "do you see the movements, my boy? Do you see Uncle Sam's devoted servants?"

"Yes. I can see them with the naked eye, but they are surveyors, Kit. We are on the wrong trail."

"Well, what makes you think so, Silver Star?"

"That's easy enough determined. That man in front is the flag-man; the two behind the wagon are the chain-bearers—you can see them at work—and those two away behind are the engineer or surveyor and his assistant. With the glass you can see his compass and staff easy enough."

"That's all so, boy, and you can see their guns and pistols, too. I tell you that's a clever trick to fool the unsophisticated; but it won't pan with me worth a cent. I've seen men go down the pulpit in ministerial robes, and yet be the hired servant of the devil. Now, Silver, I, Kit Bandy, know that there are no surveyors in this country, else they'd be escorted by the military. Old Arky and me made them feller's camp a visit 'other day, and we see'd all wasn't right then. No, that surveyin' business is all a

blind, and I'll bet ten to one that the gals are in that wagon."

"Then you must have positive proof of the fact," said the Boy Knight.

"I have, Silver; the girls are in that wagon!"

"Then, by gracious, Kit, I—"

"Now hold on, Silver Star—set down and keep cool—don't let a brace of pretty gals make a plumb fool of you. I don't blame you for lovin' them, but I don't blame you for lovin' them."

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Reaching the "marker," Kit dismounted, placed the staff by the flag and then adjusted the compass and liberated the needle. The flagman was in plain view, though nearly a mile away.

Kit took the field-glass and scanned the whole party before him carefully. The glass brought them so close that he almost shuddered. He could see the very eyes of the flagman, a villainous-looking fellow, apparently looking right into his own face.

"I tell you, boy, they're armed like pirates and all good men—on good horses; but, that makes no difference. We must put them off the Buffalo Pass route, and throw them east. I see Herman, the bugger, was only runnin' on about one or two degrees bearin', but I'll pop her around to about ten degrees this time, and a little more next, and that'll about take us to the Open Wood Ford. Dast the needle, it dips and bobs round too much to suit me—too much attractions. It reminds me of old Sabina when there's other ladies around me; but thar, that's good enough."

The needle having settled, Old Kit glanced through the sights, then took off his hat in his right hand and held it out from him. The flagman understood the signal, and at once moved his pole several rods to the right, and was kept moving until Kit was afraid to go further for fear too much of a deviation at one time might arouse suspicion. It is true, the sun could not be seen, and so no one could tell exactly, the points of the compass, except those with the compass; still Kit was afraid the outlaws might know the country better than he did.

When the flagman was given the signal to "stick"—by the surveyor raising both hands and then dropping them—he marked the spot with a little flag and went on; while Kit, mounting his horse, rode on, laughing till his sides ached.

"Yesterday was your day, Silver Star," he said, "and to-day's mine. You were a wind-spirit, and now a civil engineer. Ho! ho! ho—orn of Joshua! won't thar be a blin' at camp when them fools ahead find out that we're running this helm-business. Sounds! if they'd a glass they might see that your clothes hangs looish on you, and that your legs are poked through this coat further than Herman's were. Oh, but this is a scientific party—ha! ha! ha! But I wonder whar Professor Daymon is with his maps and lofty intellect!"

The two rode on until they came to the next "marker," when Kit again set the compass and sighted the compass. As before, he gave their course a few degrees east bearing; and in this way they went on for some ten miles without detection. The last "set" made by the flagman brought him to the edge of the timber bordering the Big Chyenne river.

It was now almost dark, and as old Kit knew the party would encamp at the river when they found they were out of their course, the old man was at a loss as to what he should do. They dare not go on, of course, and the absence of Herman and the Mexican might soon reveal the state of affairs. But after all, he had accomplished all he aimed at—had thrown the outlaws more than five miles out of their course.

"Well, Silver," the old man said, "we might as well ride back and meet the rest of the folks and hold a council of war—the war itself, if Sabina's there yet. All the skulduggery part is through with now, and next comes the blood and danger part."

They turned about and rode back along the trail, and had gone but a short distance when they discovered Old Arkansas and Sparrowhawk riding toward them at the top of their animals' speed.

"What in the furries are you up now?" exclaimed Kit.

"They surely haven't left that outlaw with that wife of yours," remarked Silver Star.

In a moment the riders drew up before them.

"Good God, Bandy!" exclaimed Arkansas, "that man Braash got away from us!"

Horn of Joshua! how come that! Were you asleep, Arky?"

"No; that infernal old woman of yours did it through confounded spite. You see, we mounted the prisoner on Silver Star's horse, and then hitched the horse to Sabina's mule, and when the backs were lashed, she let the hitch-rail, and before we could say Jack Robin's side, the rascal put them big spurs into Prince's side and shot away like an arrow."

"Well, great Jehovah! that'll spile all our rangelands, sure. Why didn't you strangle that woman?"



NEW YORK, MARCH 16, 1878.

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SOON TO APPEAR!

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A Sterling Series.

We commence in this number of the SATURDAY JOURNAL a series of biographic and personal sketches of typical women of the present and past. To give it a varied and unique value we shall alternate the fine work of the late Mrs. E. F. Bilet with that of Dr. Legrand—an old favorite of our readers in the historic field; and thus in the course of the season the SATURDAY JOURNAL audience will have added greatly to its store of mind treasures.

Good writers ought to make good legislators, for they are pretty sure to know what they want and the best mode of presenting their case. We see by the Iowa press that our contributor, Oll Coomes, now in the legislature of that State in his first term is not an idle or useless member. He goes to work like an old hand. The knotty yet exceedingly important question of the right of the State to regulate the rates and service of railways within its limits, and the rights of the railway corporations to regulate their own affairs Mr. Coomes meets in a statesmanlike way by proposing a regular commission which shall have control of the whole matter at issue between the people and the railways—similar to the Massachusetts law, and which has worked so well. This is a sensible solution of a difficult problem and is just what might be expected from a writer for the SATURDAY JOURNAL!

A WORD FOR THE FLOWERS.—If we do not all become Amateur Flower Culturists, it will not be from lack of sources of information. The various seedsmen's catalogues are so admirable in description, and so full of correct directions for culture that their study is exceedingly pleasant, even for those who have no garden, while for those who have their plot of ground the neat and pretty books (for such they are, in many cases) supplied either free or at trifling cost, are all that can be desired. It is a good work these men are doing—disseminating a wide-spread taste for and knowledge of flowers; and though they thus advertise their "goods" they are none the less public benefactors, whose contribution to the fund of general intelligence and specific information must be acknowledged by every observant person. We take pleasure in advertising occasionally to them to encourage our readers in the pursuit of what certainly is a most pleasant, healthful, and, not unfrequently, a very profitable pursuit—the culture of flowers. The Catalogues with which we are familiar are those of James Vicks, and Briggs & Bros., of Rochester, and Bliss & Co., Thornburn, Peter Henderson, and Wm. H. Carson of New York City.

"If the story is not suitable for your paper will you kindly name its chief faults?"

As we have again and again announced that we cannot add to our onerous editorial work the gratuitous and always thankless service of critic and school-master, we can only account for a renewal of the request on the supposition that each writer deems himself or herself an exception to all necessary general rules.

It is, we suppose, just like each one's child; to say that that particular darling is not an exception to children in general is proof positive that we either know too little or know too much; but, when it happens that the number of bright particular darlings equal in count the aggregate of children *en masse*, we must, in sheer despair, find excuse in a class or "lump" classification for not praising every snub-nose, sausage-face epitome of humanity thrust into our arms for compliment and candy.

If writers will just imagine the similarity of situation with respect to contributions and babies they will see how impossible it is for us to consent to make exceptions to a good standing order. To "give reasons" is to embark on a sea of troubles that in time would wear away even the rocky heart of Shakespeare's "vexed Bermoothes." None of that sea for us in these perplexed days!

Sunshine Papers.

Know Your Own Door.

A MAN applied to a friend of mine, a day or so ago, for the privilege of varnishing, or oiling, her front door. He would do the work for a small remuneration, and so finely that "You won't know your own door, madam, when I'm through."

That would instantly settle the case for me, thought I. If you please, I prefer to know my own door. It would be rather awkward to be walking into other people's houses, without leave or license. Besides there are plenty of people in the world, now, who do not know their own doors; some, on occasion—some, the majority of the time.

Young scapegrace, across the street, frequently comes home in the "we sma' hous," with a very muddled consciousness regarding the exact locality of his own door. He always has a peculiar look the next morning. So peculiar, that you feel sure he made a fool of himself the night before. His eyes are red and heavy, he has a hang-dog way of carrying himself, and a generally dilapidated, headachy, shamed face about him. And his mother, herself, airs, and cleans, and arranges his room that day, and looks tearful and broken-hearted.

Mr. Ostentation, who lives up the street, and makes a great show of his prosperity, his charity, his stern morality, and his church connection, occasionally attends a committee meeting, or a board meeting, or a club meeting, where none of his strictly virtuous acquaintances may be found, and comes home decidedly at a loss as to where to find his own door. But, bless us! if any one hears of it they only smile, and say:

"Why it's nothing, my dear! They all do it! Just a few glasses too much of wine! A gentleman like him could not refuse to drink at a dinner, you know; it would look so vulgar and ill-bred! The very fact that he was so affected, shows that the good man was not accustomed to such excesses! Oh, it is not the least to his discredit!"

"So say we all of us," for Mr. Ostentation is rich; we like to associate with his handsomely-dressed wife, we like our children to be seen walking, arm-in-arm, with his children from school; we like to be invited to his elegantly-furnished home; we like to head our subscription lists with his large donations; we like to hear him denounce "wickedness in high places" and tell how he hopes that our city will select an upright man for the next mayoralty (meaning himself); we like to have him pay the largest pew-rent and largest premium for an uppermost seat in our special synagogue.

But, there is Mr. Lowly, lives around the corner. He has been out of work for eleven months; his family are getting awfully pinched for want of a sufficiency of food and clothing, and he is nearly desperate, as day by day goes by, and he can find no steady employment, where a moment of deep agony and dejection is invited to "take a drink," and with the idea of lessening, even momentarily, his mental anguish, he accepts. He comes home that night and does not know his own door. Before he finds it, he fumbles at the latch of Mrs. Loosetongue. She watches him through the upper blinds. The next day every one who ever heard of Mr. Lowly knows that he is a drunkard! (Odd, is it not? But no one was ever a drunkard that owned fifty thousand dollars!) One neighbor says—"I thought of giving him a place in my store next month, my porter is going to leave and I thought I might get Lowly at a little reduction; but, of course, I shall not ask him, now!" Another neighbor, declares—"I always thought they were low people; I shall forbid my children playing with the Lowlys any more!" This neighbor remarks, "I was going to give Mrs. Lowly quite a bundle of old clothing to make over for the family, but I must look out for some more deserving people, now!" And that neighbor asserts that "It is a disgrace to the locality to have that Lowly living here, and coming home so drunk nights that he cannot find his own door!"

In fact, they are all exceedingly neighborly! And they all forget that Mrs. Scapegrace's son often does not know his own door, and that Mr. Ostentation occasionally does not know his own door, and that they have some relative who has been known to get into a wrong house, or a station-house, over night, and that they, themselves—oh, pray whisper it!—once drank half a glass of ale and had to lie on the sofa for some hours afterward! But, then, we all know that forgetfulness is ever so much nicer than remembrance, upon certain occasions. Memories are as convenient little articles as ever were created; they seem to work by a double set of springs; you touch one set, and memory becomes excessively short, and narrow, and diminutive, every way; you touch the other set and memory instantly becomes inconveniently large.

But, altogether, not knowing one's own door, is a very bad state to be in—though if you are real rich you can buy plenty of excuses—and I would advise you, my friend, not to spend any money in a way which will result in such a deplorable degradation of your mental powers!

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

NEEDED WORDS.

"HONOR thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

From my childhood I have always been taught to respect the aged, and I just as willingly want to vote as to say harsh or cruel things against Grandma Lawless—bless her dear, good, honest soul! But, when I look about and notice how much disrespect there is shown to those whose heads are whitened by age, and the snappish way they are spoken to, and the spiteful way of it, it makes one heart-sick, and one longs to give these disrespecters of age a talking to, and sometimes I do so.

A very flippant young miss, who seems to imagine she is made of much finer clay than the rest of us "poor miserable creatures," possesses that hateful trait of not reverencing old age. I don't know but she considers that I should be put in a straight-jacket, or have my ears pulled for writing in so direct a manner as I do. Yet I don't care for that; I am strong enough to bear all the epithets bestowed upon me, but I will not stand calmly by and see the aged insulted. And that this saint-like miss does insult the aged, I have proof positive.

One day, when she called at the Lawless mansion, she was very free in her remarks, and was continually abusing an individual whom she styled "Old Moll," who appeared to have all the faults in the world. I was at a loss to know who "Old Moll" was; and, when I don't know all I want to concern myself with certain matters, I am prone to ask questions. The mystery leaked out, and "Old Moll" proved to be this girl's own grandmother.

I knew this grandmother, and I knew her to be a self-sacrificing, generous woman, who, deprived herself of many things that this very miss and her brothers and sisters—parents as well—might not suffer, and, had it not been for her, the whole tribe might have been in the poorhouse, long ago.

And if you upbraided this angelic miss with her conduct, she would say she "wished her grandmother was a Christian." Yes, that is the string she harps on all the time, in prayer meetin' and out of prayer meetin', until she seems to forget that she had best be minding her own business.

Not a Christian! Is it not Christianlike to help another, to work for others' welfare, to keep the hungry from starving and help to clothe the naked? And is this young miss a Christian? Her reply is that she is. Well, a great many of us imagine that we are actually the reverse of what we really are. But, is it Christianlike to treat with disrespect the aged, to sit at home in idleness while a poor old relative walks several miles to the store for necessities of life, that the younger members should obtain, then go to prayer meetin' and on the way home roundly abuse one's relations and neighbors? I don't like such Christianity, and I don't believe the Lord approves of it. There's too much cant, and too little justice in it.

Those who respect the aged cannot have very bad hearts; there must be some gems of goodness in their composition. I do so love to see people kind to and thoughtful of their elders, and I can't believe one is a whit the worse for showing this kindness, but I can believe they are made better. Remember, time flies and the years pass speedily away. It will not be long ere you and I, who are now young, will be aged and we'll want some one to make our departing years easier. We'll not want to be wished out of the way; we'll not want to think we are of no use; that there is no room for us; that every mouthful we eat is begrudged to us. I am sure I shall not. But, if we neglect those who are now old we must expect to be neglected when we, ourselves, become aged, and what a dreadful thought that! All our love for the old, our care for and attention to them, is never wasted; it will be returned to us, if not by them, by others; if not now, then in the future, when we shall have sore need of it.

Why should we strive to make their life-paths thornier? Why put them in the shade when they need the sunshine? When gentleness pays more interest than harshness, why should we invest more in the latter than the former? These are questions which should come home to us, and can we answer them truly by saying—"because we think it is right we should do so?"

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Concerning Man.

MAN was one among the first human beings on the earth.

He was given dominion over all the beasts of the field, but it is fun to see him run away from a little yellow dog and yell "git out," and his influence on a cat-fight at night is very subdued.

Darwin says he was originally an ape. He was said to have been created perfect. He then has lost much of his original attributes.

There are a great many species of man. In fact, there are all kinds and other varieties.

He is endowed with great reasoning powers, yet for the life of him he cannot tell why the style of women's hats must change once every month. He is great at finding out, but he can no more tell why a woman must be amiable away from home and cross at home than he can fly—into a passion about it and make it any better.

The principal letter in the alphabet of his life is J, and it is always a capital; among the small letters he always places a.

He is called the lord of creation. If he has no excuse he can create one; he can create a dispute or a disturbance equally well.

Man born of woman and out of money is in a few days full of trouble.

Mankind is glorious, but man unkind is horrible to contemplate.

Man is said to be the author of his own misfortune. It is a large book; all rights (or wrongs) reserved by the author, as it is copyrighted.

He was given dominion over the fowls of the air yet he never put salt on a bird's tail, unless it might be a quail's on toast.

Man is endowed with a mind that is far above his neighbor's. He measures the distances of the stars and calls them by their wrong names; but his own ways are fast finding out.

Man in Massachusetts is the inferior being—a woman having the superiority by several thousand.

Man is supposed to be about six thousand years of age—enough years to last a man his lifetime.

Man is a strange animal, but it is not altogether known as being wild. If it exhibited any such symptoms its wife has been known to manage it with consummate tact and it has become pretty tame.

Man prides himself on the precedence of his birth, and loves to assure his wife that woman was made from a rib taken from his fore-

father's side, and as a consequence this has been the bone of contention, and not of content, ever since that important event. That bone has been the skeleton in many a house to this day.

When a man gets to thinking that he knows about all the little things pretty much that mortals were divinely intended to know, he can start a pretty good-sized lunatic asylum on his own hook without having to advertise for patients. Some men the older they get the more they don't know, and they are proud of it.

One thing that characterizes man, from all other animals is that he is capable of forming opinions of himself—and others; more of himself than others. His opinions of himself are his own and why try to despoil him of their comfort? A man has a right to think as much of himself as of anybody else, and he does it. Having originally lost a rib the chief end of man seems to be to get another rib, and then comes the rib-bone.

Man lives in the expectation of being somebody or somebody else, and is apt, if he strives, to make his mark—on every thing he touches, especially if his fingers are dirty.

There are seven ages of man; the crib-age, the cab-age, the non-age, the sauce-age, the break-age, the mar-riage and the dot-age.

Man from the earliest ages has figured pretty extensively in the history of various nations of the earth; he is pretty generally with the people, and is included among the masses; but a man is only a man when he conducts himself like a man and is known by his manners.

A man who will do unto a fellow-man what his fellow-man has done unto him isn't the smallest half of a man; but when his wash-woman sends home his week's washing with everything on them but the buttons he has a perfect right according to the latest revised statutes to relax a little on his manliness and modestly employ a reasonable number of Latin expletives—that is, if he reasonably thinks he can swear half the buttons on again.

Man is divided into two general classes, Big man and Little man. There are none of the latter class on this globe.

Man will take up arms in the defense of his home and boldly battle for it, sometimes even with his mother-in-law, defending his threshold against all invaders with heroic determination—unless it might be burglars, when in that case, he might fortify himself under the bed or serve as a rear guard to his wife.

Man is formed pretty much all over the face and the back of the globe, and in some parts of Louisiana, but the drunken man who lost his hat with the brick still in it which you light-heartedly but heavily footed kicked off the sidewalk on the first end of last April, you will never find, and you need not walk around on one foot to hunt him.

The boy is father to the man. This truth was forcibly impressed upon me when I read on a sign yesterday, "John Crinklepin and Father—Attorneys at Law." It seems reasonable beyond any number of doubts, because I know a good many boys who are older than their paternal parents.

Man is endowed with great perceptive faculties and can divine hidden things, but I'll bet the next dollar I make off my neighbor in a trade that there is not one man in a hundred who can wake up at midnight and guess within forty feet of just where his clothes are scattered; and at morning it looks like a man had been shipwrecked in a wind-storm. Man is of a high order but he lacks the order.

WASHINGTON WHITEKORN.

Topics of the Time

—A disposition to economize was never more favorably assisted by fashion than at the present time. It is not uncommon to see three different fabrics in one rich costume, and quite as different a liberty is permitted to the frugal mind bent upon making use of anything that is useful. Figured silks and plain black silks supply a handsome toilet for those who do not desire to go to the expense of purchasing embossed velvets, which appear in combination with plain silks, and the charming armure silks are supplying a need long felt in silk materials.

—The recent *hazing* expose with which Princeton College—staid old Presbyterian Princeton—regales us is a sad evidence of the combined inefficiency of a college faculty and the innate depravity of students. The Sophs brutally misuse a Fresh—so brutally indeed that his fellows, aroused to resentment, proceed in a body to the room of the leader of the Sophs and deliberately shave his head. He retorts, when released, by using a pistol, and the affair ends with his being shot and severely wounded. It is a disgrace that such a custom as *hazing* should be treated otherwise than with the severest penalty of the law against ruffianly assault, and we sincerely hope every boy in Princeton identified with the late outrages will be made to appease his appetite for "fun" inside of a prison-cell, where a six-months season of reflection may teach him that a young "gentleman" who is a ruffian is equally a disgrace to himself, his family and the college he discredits.

—The hue and cry against American fast life and the overwork and excitement that cause premature death is not sustained by facts. Men in the full vigor of their faculties are common enough at seventy. Here we have, of course, known to all, Henry C. Carey, William Cullen Bryant and Peter Cooper, still at work at the age of 85. And Mr. Cameron is in his 80th year, and by no means ready to fall asleep while his administration lasts. Horace Binney, waiting but three years of being a century, was recently buried in Philadelphia, after a very exciting and active life; and recalling other prominent men whose lives were active and laborious, there was Webster, who lived to 70 years; Clay, to 75; Benton, an additional year; Chief Justice Marshall, 80; John Quincy Adams, 81; Thomas Jefferson, 83; Lewis Cass, 84; and Chief Justice Taney, 87. The list can be easily extended, and the more it is examined the more fully it will be proved that American life is no more deadly than European, and that professional life has as good chances of continuance here as there.

—In Dr. Legrand's sketch of Christopher Columbus, published in the SATURDAY JOURNAL No. 342 (Sept. 30, 1876), it is stated that the great discoverer's remains were brought from Seville, Spain, as ordered in his will, and interred (January, 1795) taken up and transferred to the right side of the altar of the great cathedral in Havana, Cuba, with extraordinary and imposing ceremony. It has lately transpired that the whole reburial was an imposture, and that the bones of the admiral yet repose in their original resting-place. An English scientific man writes to *Nature*:—"The remains of Christopher Columbus are to-day in Santo Domingo. Unfortunately I am not able now to send you the full data. Suffice it to say that the chain of all possible precaution, and has been verified with all possible precision. The chest was perpetuated by a then member of the 'Cabillo,' who had the knowledge, the tact and the unscrupulousness to perpetrate it successfully. The whole consular corps, all the Government officials and all the better class, alike of natives and foreigners, at the time in Santo Domingo City are witnesses of the authenticity of the 'find.'"

Readers and Contributors.

Accepted: "An Old Maid," "The Last of the Year," "A Poor Millionaire," "The Best of All," "When Daisies Come," "An Actual Motion," "How Many Lost," "Mary's Little Man," "The Lover That's True."

Declined: "The Doctor's Romance," "An Old Maid's Story," "A Space in the Air," "Do We Know?" "Mason Never Stole the Rocky John," "The Chinaman's Pappoose," "Big Biggin," "A Wonderful Boy," "When Jane meets Jane."

EXPLORER. There is no "araing fluid." An acid is used in *exploring* the bones of the dead, and paraffin, and chlorine is then used to bleach the discolored bones. Your chronophy is good.

JERU. Having had no practical experience with the telephone we cannot express our opinion. As it is coming into everyday use in the Departments at Washington, and is usefully applied elsewhere between offices and houses widely separated, we see no obstacle in its wide-spread adoption.

CLAY-MIND. There is no method of obtaining position of captain's clerk but by applying to ship-owner or captain. It is well enough to study navigation, but, in these days of steam, unless you really expect to sail a vessel as an officer, you will not be called upon for much "sailor knowledge."

MRS. S. L. K. In your State a married woman can hold property in her own name, may make contracts, sue and be sued, and dispose of her property by will, and, in case of her death without a will, her husband is excluded from any share in her estate. Your husband's course, we should say, amounted to coercion. Keep your property rights in your own name.

PINEY-WOOD SCATCHEL. We have no means of knowing the price of land in the county named. Land in North Carolina is, as a rule, very cheap, and no State, we are told, offers greater inducements to colonies. Single settlers probably would find it rather lonely and isolated, and too remote from market. Should say, which there are no doubt, that you will be better suited in Tennessee.

ABRAHAM ROUND-THE-CORNER. Consult any school map. The Bosphorus is the river, or channel, leading from the Black Sea, to the sea of Marmora. The Dardanelles is the river or channel from the sea of Marmora to the Mediterranean. The two forts, at the Southern end of this channel, are really the true Dardanelles and from them the name is derived, and obtained its name. The term, Golden Horn, is applied to the harbor of Constantinople, which is a half moon in shape.

LITERARY. We do not remember to have seen Starr King's list of one hundred books for self-culture. We can guess what many of them must be. The list must be so chosen as to have each volume supplement another, to form a consistency of subject and information. We presume the Boston "Literary World" will give you the actual list if you suggest its publication. An excellent aid in, and guide to, the choice of books to buy and read is Putnam's Library Companion.

DOCKET No. 2. Take the candy to some chemist. The coloring matter may have been—probably was—poisonous, for candy is not so simple as it seems. Use arsenical coloring matter. Many of the so-called aniline colors are poisonous. As sugar is sold at ten cents per pound, and the cheapest candy is sold from twenty to thirty cents, the profit is too great to excuse adulteration, yet enormous quantities of flour, corn-starch, white clay and gelatine are used by confectioners, and the candy is not safe to eat, not the rule, we are assured.

MIDDLEBORN NOT. Such a list of sketches as those you speak of ran through the Journal in 1876. Should recommend for you to get Higginson's "Youth's History of America," which is a very interesting work. The Turks were originally Tartars or Tartars. They are an Asiatic, not European race. A Turk not a Mohammedan would not wear a turban, and the most enlightened and best educated of the race—and many of them are well educated—are followers of the Prophet; hence their very civilization is antagonistic to European ideas. They would either abjure Mohammedanism or leave Europe.

ANNESTATA. It is difficult to advise you. You certainly are entitled to a fair return for your labors. The idea of becoming a nurse is not a bad one if you can gain admission to a hospital, and if you suggest for you to write first to the directors of your own State Asylum, which each have their hospitals or sick wards; next, to hospitals in Philadelphia and New York, and then to the directors of a considerable number; or, if no list of these is attainable, write to the Directors of St. John's Hospital, New York, and the lady directress may give you such suggestions or directions as will assist you in your work. Places are not easily obtained, but persevere. Would it not be better, after all, to start right out and learn the dressmaker's trade?

F. B. S. (Philadelphia). You can hardly expect anything but broken promises from a young woman of such character as to frequent the places to which you refer. No respectable girl, be she ever so poor and illiterate, but would shrink at the thought of being seen in such places of entertainment; and the fact that the girl to whom you refer has been in the habit of frequenting such places, and continues to do so, despite your advice, is a proof that she is an entirely unworthy your love. Only a complete reformation in her conduct, can make her worthy to become any respectable man's wife.

We would suggest that young men who desire to be like and modest girls for sweethearts, should be as careful in their own conduct, and as irreproachable in their morals, as their mothers, as they desire the women to be, whom they seek to marry.

A CONSTANT READER. (Atlanta, Ga.) writes: "Please be so kind as to answer the following questions: Give me a list of American Poets. The latest style in arranging a book is to give the names of the poets in alphabetical order, and to give the names of the poets in alphabetical order. Will you make the eyes sparkle? A remedy for weak eyes. And can you judge my character by my handwriting? It would be impossible, in a short space like this, to give you a complete list of American poets. Among the principal ones are Aldrich, Bryant, Alice Cary, Phoebe Cary, Will Carleton, Emerson, Bryant, Bret Hart, John Hay, Charles Follen, Hoffman, Howland, O. W. Holmes, Julia Ward Howe, 'H. H.' (Mrs. Hunt), Longfellow, Lowell, Lucy Larcom, Joaquin Miller, Adeline May, and many others. J. Howard Payne, T. Buchanan Read, Saxe, Mrs. Sigourney, Edmund C. Stedman, Swinburne, Bayard Taylor, Tennyson, H. D. Thoreau, Whitman, and W. F. Williams. And as to the matter of the head as possible, and no false hair used. In front there is either a center-part, or it is combed straight back, with a fluffy fringe over the brow. Those ladies to whom high hair-dressing is not becoming, wear the hair in one or two broad plaits looped at the nape of the neck. Address Secretary of Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., for a leaflet, with cologne or alcohol dropped on it, will make the eyes sparkle. Also soap-suds, made of Castile soap, filtered in the morning, and the remedy for weak eyes is pure Pond's Extract, diluted one-half with rain or soft water. Wash the eyes in this night and morning, and once or twice through the day. Never read while traveling, and do not use the eyes by any poor light, and avoid all fine print and dark work in the evening. If your eyes do not improve, consult a physician. We do not pretend to read character by handwriting, but your penmanship seems to indicate an independent, vigorous character.

KATIE L. writes: "Please tell me who were the Fates, and what they did? Who were the Graces and the Muses? Is Cecile a girl's name, or a boy's? I hope you won't think me so troublesome as to throw my letter aside." The Fates were three powerful goddesses, called by the ancients Parcae. They were represented as old women. Clotho held a distaff, and was supposed to preside over the birth of mortals, and spin the thread of their lives. Lachesis held a spindle, presided over the fate, and continued spinning the thread of life. Atropas held scissors, and presided over death, cutting the thread of life. "The Graces or Grætiæ, also called Charities, were the daughters of Jupiter and Venus. They were constant attendants on the beautiful Venus, and were, themselves, young, beautiful and modest. Their names were Aglaia, Thalia and Phœnoe. The Muses, or Musæ, were the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne. There were nine of these goddesses, Clio, muse of history, who was crowned with laurels, and held a trumpet in one hand, a book in the other; Euterpe, muse of music, and supposed to be the inventress of the flute and the lyre; Thalia, muse of comedy, who was crowned with ivy and held a scepter in her right hand, and a shepherd's crook; Melpomene, muse of tragedy, her garments were splendid, and she held a dagger in her right hand, a scepter and crown in the other; Terpsichore, muse of dancing, of which she was considered the inventress; Erato, muse of lyric, tender, and amorous poetry; Polyhymnia, muse of singing and rhetoric, was veiled in white, a crown of jewels on her head, and a scepter in her left hand; Calliope, muse of eloquence and heroic poetry; Urania, muse of astronomy, was dressed in azure, and held in her hand a globe and mathematical instruments. All of these were mythological characters, worshipped in ancient Greece. You should study mythology. It is interesting and instructive. Cecile is a name used for both boys and girls; sometimes it is spelled Cecile for girls. We are always glad to answer our correspondents with advice and instruction. Instead of saying "I hope you won't think," etc., you should have written, "I hope you will not," etc. Won't is not a correct term to use under any circumstances.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

"Never!" exclaimed Myra, excitedly, at last roused to the desperation of retorting on this ghostly adviser. "That girl is no cousin of mine—in her blood is the taint of slavery, and the Wainwright money shall never go to a creature whose veins run impure streams."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the ghost, derisively.

"Come, Lizette, come away!" and the mistress dragged the maid after her.

"What do you think of this?" she asked, when they had shut themselves in the chamber, across the corridor.

"Mademoiselle," answered the French girl, "Je le pense très mystérieux."

"But Mr. Garwell says it is all trickery."

"Is there any one in your household who could or would be guilty of it, mademoiselle?"

"Ah, there it is, Lizette! Nearly all the servants in the house have been changed since this thing began; besides, who is there knows the secrets of our family?"

The French girl shook her pretty head and looked puzzled; evidently the matter was too deep for her.

"You go bring me my dress and jewel-casket, Lizette; it is time to dress for dinner. I will not put my foot in that chamber again, if I can help it."

While Lizette was assisting at the elaborate toilet, which the foreign woman wanted to see the mistress.

"Tell her, Olive, and she will comprehend," was the message she sent, miss," said the servant.

"Very well, I will be down in five minutes. And remember—while she remains I am at home to no one else. So, she is back quickly," she muttered to herself.

Lizette clasped the necklace about her white neck, pinned the scintillating butterfly in her fair hair, looked up in the secretary where her uncle used to keep his papers. Perhaps I had better send it to our safe in the vaults of the bank, to-morrow?"

At that instant, before John could reply, that hollow, mocking, ghostly laugh floated about over the room.

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"What was that?" asked Olive, turning pale.

"Nothing—nothing," murmured Myra, also looking color.

"Come in the drawing-room," said John; "some of the servants are amusing themselves. Myra, you should be more strict with them—but you are young and indulgent."

But before they left the room the voice arrested them:

"Woman, thou hast lied. Of what avail are falsehoods in the awful presence of the disembodied soul? I, Cyrill Wainwright, charge thee with thy lies. *Ay! tremble—quake to the very foundations of thy body!*—for thou art at work which shall overthrow thee and thy revenge. Hidden things shall come to light. Beware, lest thou die without confession. Let the priest shrive thee while there is yet time. And ye, cruel ones, who would wrong the innocent, your triumph shall be brief!"

"Oh, Jesu! Oh, Mary, Mother of God!" murmured the Cuban, looking wildly about her.

"Come in here!" repeated Garwell, dragging her out of the haunted boudoir. This is all nonsense, nonsense, now how can you be the author of it, I'd take it out of his hide. Don't mind it, Olive! It is only a joke!"

But he was a little shaken himself; and the woman would not remain a moment longer in the house, but went away, crossing herself and muttering.

CHAPTER XV.

WAS IT LOVE?

A GREAT dread, in those days, was ever present in Ethel's mind, and that dread was that her mother might take a fancy to marry her to a quaintance—perhaps claim from her the duties and service of a daughter.

In view of such a possibility, her present life appeared to be a heaven of calm security. She was not unhappy—aid in this horrible fear which often paled her cheeks.

Mr. Wainwright always had been fondly proud of Ethel's mental superiority to many girls in her circle. Petted, flattered, beautiful, it would hardly have been strange if she had given herself to herself, and that she had never been so with Ethel. She had resources in her own mind which made her independent of the crowd of friends and lovers who fluttered about her.

Now, in the days of her adversity, she used these resources not only to earn money to pay for her humble living, but as a pleasant way of spending the days no longer besieged by throngs of idle flatterers. Her health was splendid. Just to walk abroad in the fresh morning air was a delight, and she was now in the habit of taking a walk every day, with her step and sparkling eyes—put away her hat, and, trimmed with a wreath of daisies manufactured by her skillful fingers—and sit down to her lovely flower-painting, or that almost as exquisite needle-pointing in which she excelled, and for which she was famous in the city.

One of these pieces of embroidery she intended to have exhibited as a work of art at the May exhibition at the Academy. It represented the "blessed damsel" of Rossetti's poetry, leaning from heaven, and so delicately were her silken fingers, and so gracefully her attitude, sign—made by herself—that it was truly a picture.

She no longer veiled in secret over the baseness of John Garwell; in place of tears came a song of gladness because she had escaped a life with him—she wondered now how she could have been so deceived, and shuddered over the idea that she might have opened her eyes too late.

Ethel turned from men, now; she did not look forward to marriage, but calmly planned to fill her days with work, and to use her talents and abilities. To be able to hire a good painter for her room, and to buy all the new books and magazines she wanted, was the present height of her ambition. Her room in that small cottage was somewhat bare and low; but she had a little bed, and a small table, and a small chest, and she could spare the time, she decorated the chamber with her own drawings. The company of her old-time nursery-governess at meals was formal and meager, but not coarse; the two children were nice little creatures who looked up to her as something more than a governess; and this was nearly all the society she had. One or two of her old mates she allowed to visit her. Sometimes Mr. Dobell dropped in for an hour. Not an exciting life by any means.

Mr. Evelyn was again in Cuba on her affairs. The only tolerably regular caller she had was the young cadet, Bertram Leigh.

And how he came to be a frequent caller she hardly understood. Mr. Evelyn had told her about this young fellow, and she had been told that she alone, had deeply enlisted her sympathies; then he had gone on further to say that Coralie Clyde had run away on account of this handsome cadet—that they had become lovers in consequence of Leigh saying her life was in the peril of his own; so she had fancied she should like to know him; and Evelyn had brought and introduced the youth before her (Evelyn) departed on his second mission to Cuba.

Did the young lawyer not reflect that it might be dangerous to his own cause to do this? Whether he did or not he made no excuses, but brought Bertram to see her the evening before he himself sailed.

And the cadet had been charmed by the beautiful girl, so noble and so cheerful in her new sphere. He came often and often, so that the children learned to peep out of their mother's sitting-room and speak to him when they heard his peculiar ring. Their grave mother, too, began to smile, and have thoughts to herself about the frequency of his visits, and to hope, for Miss Ethel's sake, that her suspicions would prove correct.

As for Ethel, if the gallant young gentleman admired her, she returned the admiration without reserve.

Bertram's visits were like bursts of sunshine in upon the gray plainness of her days. He was gay; he was witty, or at least, full of fun;

he was extremely handsome; he was interesting, inasmuch as he was a youth without name or family; he had engaging manners; was full of chivalry, spirit and ambition.

His bright face and sunny hair ornamented Ethel's "daisies" as some other of her pictures did. She fell into the habit of looking for him. If he did not come for two or three days, she missed him more than she would like to confess.

Evelyn, soberly and faithfully working in her cause, would have felt a pang strike to his heart like a knife, could he have looked through space and beheld the two together, so gay, so confidential.

"I'm getting to be immensely fond of you, Miss Ethel," the cadet declared to her once, after a month's acquaintance.

"How can you say that?" she cried, merrily. "Remember what the news is about Coralie!"

"Ay! The dove-colored ladies did not want me to get hold of that—did they?" and he laughed merrily. "How did you happen to hear about the letter, Miss Ethel?"

"Oh, a little bird told me!"

"Thanks to the little bird, then! Only two weeks more to the fifteenth of April! What a witch Coralie is, isn't she? You are better than she, in many respects—you have more—dignity."

"I am sure," as some other of her pictures did. "Don't lieutenant me yet awhile, please! But I dare say you know I'm bound to be an admiral, some day."

"Certainly! I shall be disappointed if you are not."

"Do you take so much interest in me, then?"

"More than I have ever taken in any young gentleman before!"

"I can't tell you how happy that makes me," said Bertram, bowing elaborately over her hand, which he had seized, and kissing it.

"How can you say that?" she asked, and he felt suffocated—and then you float about deliciously, as if you were swimming on a bed of down."

"I see you understand drowning."

"Yes—I was almost gone once. That was last summer."

"Really? How did it happen?"

"Oh, a sailor was knocked overboard; and as he was stunned by the blow, he could not save himself; so I jumped in after him. He had gone down so deep, I couldn't find him, and I stayed under the water a good while. Consequences, we both had to be fished out."

"Don't do it again, my dear cadet!"

"I won't—unless there is similar need. Let me see, this is the third of April!"

"Yes, and Myra is to be married on the tenth; there are the cards in that basket."

"Are you going to the wedding?"

"I may go to the church, but I shall not appear at the house."

"And on the fifteenth, my little Quakeress is coming home."

"I don't know. That will be according to how she receives me. She may prove false, who knows—"

"Trust her not, she is fooling thee! Beware, beware!"

she was a madcap."

"That kind of a girl makes a splendid wife, Mr. Leigh."

"If I ever marry her, we shall have to elope. Her antics don't fancy me, you know."

"Elope, then, and I will give you my blessing—seeing neither of you have parents to do it."

"Miss Ethel, I really do feel an uncommon affection for you!"

"It is returned. Who is that ringing the bell, I wonder?"

"Any one for you, I'm going."

"No, at still. I seldom have any visitor but you."

But, presently, a light tap on the door announced that this one was for her, at least. Ethel stood to the door and opened it while the Ethel stood, cap in hand, ready to take his leave.

"Ah, Lizette, how do you do?" said Ethel, warmly, as the visitor stepped into the room.

"Who the deuce is that?" thought Bertram, as after saying good-evening, he went away with a light step. "Must be that pretty French girl Miss Ethel told me about. She was immensely pretty, too; and how full of mischief her eyes were!"

"If I were not so dead in love with Coralie, I should almost imagine myself smitten by this Ethel!" he confessed, as he walked briskly on.

"What a sweet, lovely, glorious girl she is! I should hardly know how to fool away the tedious time until the fifteenth, if she were not so friendly to me!"

But, presently, he was glad he had taken himself off, this time. She had an engagement to go out with Lizette. It was still very early in the evening; and in that quiet part of the city the two girls were not afraid to go out together; so they soon started.

Lizette had something hidden under her cloak which she occasionally stole a look at, always bursting into a suppressed laugh as she did so. Ethel, on the other hand, was deeply agitated; she sometimes paused in her walk, trembled, and seemed to wish to turn back; but the French girl urged her on.

"All means are fair in love and war!" assumed Lizette.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 412.)

Happy Jack;

OR,

The White Chief of the Sioux.

A ROMANCE OF SPIRITS AND PERILS OF POST AND PLAIN.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAPPY JACK WRITES A LETTER.

It required fully a minute before the long-banded eyes of the scout grew accustomed to the red, flickering torchlight. Then, hazy, indistinct outlines beyond the table grew clearer, and he recognized, among others, the presence of Baby Tom and Ben Watson. At the same moment he noticed a stumpy pen and a small pocket inkstand upon the table, beside a dingy oblong of paper, evidently a fly-leaf torn from some book.

"Now, stranger," briskly uttered Watson, coming around the table, evidently bent on business. "I reckon you've had time enough fer thinkin' over what we spoke to you about; we'll come to the pint at once. That's pen, paper and ink, yender; you know how to handle 'em, I reckon?"

"I can write, yes; whether I will or no, is quite another thing," quietly answered the prisoner.

"Ef you act rusty, then we must coax ye," grinned the decoy. "The boss, yender, 's powerful hefty on the coax, an' I never yit see the critter as could hold out aginst him very long, when he was in plum fix."

"Cut it short, Preacher Ben," growled Baby Tom, impatiently.

"Will you write what we ax of you, or not?" snapped the decoy. "Spit it out—yes or no!"

"You'll get nothings out of me while I am bound. Cut these things out, then I'll listen to what you have to propose—not unless," finally replied Happy Jack.

Watson cast an inquiring glance at Baby Tom. The giant promptly answered the unsolicited question.

"Turn him loose. Ef he thinks to play any tricks, so much the worse for him."

Watson drew his knife and severed the thongs that confined the scout's arms and feet, and even assisted him to arise—a task of no little difficulty, for Happy Jack found his limbs al-

most paralyzed. He leaned against the table chafing the benumbed members, and while thus occupied he made a discovery. The pen lying before him was thickly incrustated with rust, and he knew that it could not have been used for months, if not years. Might it not be that the outlaws were unable to write—or even to read writing? If so, there was yet a chance of fooling the ruffians.

His face gave no evidence of these thoughts as he drew his tall form erect and faced the scout.

"I am ready to hear what you have to say, gentlemen."

"Tell him, Preacher Ben," growled Baby Tom.

"You're to set down that an' write a letter to Colonel Markham, tellin' him jest what I say. Fetch one o' them kags, Simpson. Let the gentleman take all the ease he kin."

Happy Jack accepted the proffered seat and cleaned the pen from rust as well as he was able, but his brain was busier than his fingers. If he could only discover whether any of the outlaws were able to read!

"Ef it takes you as long to write as it does to git ready, we'd better fetch in a mule-load o' grub!" grumbled Baby Tom, in a tone of disgust.

"I was thinking whether it was worth my while to write at all," coolly replied the scout. "If I do, I cannot go back to the fort—they would kick me out for a coward, even if they didn't accuse me of being in league with you fellows. Now what can you offer me to make up for this?"

"We'll give you back your weepers an' set you free. Isn't that enough?"

"There's still another way. Write the letter among ourselves, an' then I needn't be brought forward at all, save as a prisoner. Agree to this, and, poor scout as I am, I'll give you one hundred dollars the day I'm set free."

"Can't be did, stranger, and I'll tell ye why," quickly uttered Watson. "Fust, your hand—none o' us believe so soon, of 'twas anybody else's fist. An' then—they ain't one o' us fellows as kin even write his own name, let alone stringin' together a hull letter."

Happy Jack's hopes sunk as Watson spoke, though the words themselves would seem to settle the important doubt in the very direction he had wished. But, contrary as it may sound, the scout would have been far better pleased had Watson declared that every man of them could both read and write. He knew that the decoy was no fool; the part he had played during the last night was enough to stamp him as a shrewd, clear-witted rascal, far too cunning to place a dangerous weapon in the hands of the fool he meant to use, unless he held a more powerful one in his own hand.

He felt almost certain that one at least was present who was intended to read the message when written, to satisfy the outlaws that all was as they wished.

These reflections passed through the scout's mind with wonderful rapidity, but his delay in coming to a decision was not noticed, and a grovel of impatience from Baby Tom. In another moment his resolve was taken.

"There's one point still that I cannot understand. You must know that I can have but little love for you. A man is not made a fool, of knocked down and tied up as you have served me for nothing, and if he has any blood left in his veins at all, he is going to watch for a chance to get even. Now you say that none of you can either read or write. What is to hinder me from giving the colonel plain directions for finding the place, with your numbers, and any other information that would be likely to be of service, instead of writing what you bid me?"

"I knowed you'd think o' that," laughed Watson. "But we've fixed it all right. You'll be kept in close pris'n'er until after we've got the money safe in our hands. We'll send the letter by a sure hand, an' ef he doesn't come back, safe an' sound, inside o' two days, we'll jest lift your skulp an' put out with the gal, holdin' her a reasonable time for ransom, which ef it don't come, then we're agreed Baby Tom fer shall have her fer a squaw. Now jest take a fool's advice, stranger. Give over any notion you may hev of playin' bugs onto us, fer it won't work, an' I'll only be wuss fer you an' the lady. Write down jest that you're told, an' thank us for our advice, an' then you can go on your way, an' low down varmints as'd make use o' ye an' then rub you out to make sure you shouldn't never try to pay 'em back in that own kyne."

"Very well. I will do what you ask, since I can do no better. Tell me just exactly what you wish me to say, and I'll put it down in the best shape I can," quietly responded Happy Jack.

"Now you show your good sense, an' we won't forget it ye when settin' time comes," exclaimed Watson, approvingly. "Listen, gent, ef I miss any o' the p'int, you kin set me right. Fust, tell the old man how you got away from the red-skins, but put it short. Then you went into camp, an' was surrounded by a whelp o' Crooked Valley. We come along an' run them away, reekin' our skulps a-doin' it. We're pretty hard up, an' think what we done was wuth say five thousand dollars. We've tuck such a fancy to you an' the lady that we've 'cluded to keep you as comp'ny until the money's paid. Ef the old man thinks what we did is worth the money, he kin say so, an' then you kin man as brings him this letter 'll make all the 'rangements fer the swap. Ef he don't—well, I reckon he'll hev to hunt up another 'dair, fer he'll never find two eyes on this 'n' agin. That's all. An' when you draw a long breath o' relief and satisfaction at havin' safely delivered yourself. I reckon that's about the thing. Ef any o' you kin think of any 'mendments, don't be bashful, but spit 'em right out!"

The company seemed to consider that all had been said that was necessary, and then Watson ordered the prisoner to transcribe his words.

"Put it down in your own way, but mind an' don't say any more'n what I told you," he added.

Without a word, his face betraying nothing of the real anxiety that filled his mind, Happy Jack wrote Colonel Markham's name at the top of the paper, then adding:

"After a long chase, I succeeded in rescuing Miss Markham from the six Sioux who were sent in pursuit of her yesterday. The chase lasted until sunset—forty miles or more, and her captors were obliged to travel further. We went into camp beside the spring, near the mouth of Crooked Valley, in the night, when Miss Markham was visited by one of her captors, and he demanded five thousand dollars as ransom for Miss Markham. They threatened my life if I say anything of their force or location, but in hopes that none of them can read, I am running the risk. Detain the bearer of this. Put thirty men under command of Bill Comstock. Let him follow our trail from the mouth of Crooked Valley, or, better still, pass up the valley for nearly three miles, when he will find upon the left hand a small plateau, where he can see traces of the entrance of last night. The horse-trail leading from that spot will be easily followed. I was unfolded, and hence am unable to describe our course. I believe we are now in some sort of a cave. You will not have at most more than twenty men to deal with. As yet Miss Markham has been fairly treated, but black threats are made if you fail to ransom her."

To this Happy Jack signed his name, then pushed the paper over to Watson. That was a moment of horrible suspense, when the decoy peered keenly at the well-filled page, and the scout felt that his life trembled in the balance. But then Watson passed the paper over to Baby Tom, who, after eyeing the words over his shoulder, spoke:

"Go fetch my old woman, Simpson. We'll see of the lad has bin tryin' to fool us."

Happy Jack met the suspicious glare with an unmoved countenance, though his heart beat

fast as he found his worst misgivings were about to be realized. He had fallen into the trap so cunningly set for him, and felt that he had sacrificed his life for nothing. He made no motion, but summed up all his powers of mind to make one desperate struggle, unarmed though he was, rather than tamely submit.

He was not kept long in suspense. Simpson soon returned, accompanied by a middle-aged woman, dressed almost wholly after the style of an Indian squaw. She was of unmixt blood, though, and still bore traces of beauty, even through the deep lines imprinted by care and trouble.

In silence she took the paper extended by Baby Tom, and glanced rapidly over it. Then, in a low, monotonous voice, she began to read. If, at first glance, Happy Jack still hoped, he was speedily undeceived, for the woman began reading, word for word, just as he had written!

CHAPTER XIV.

PRESSING THE SIEGE.

WHEN the endeavor to save his wounded son from an awkward fall resulted so disastrously, the White Sioux saw that there was nothing left for it but to retreat to await a more favorable opportunity. Flushed with their complete success thus far, he knew that the whites would fight with redoubled desperation. Knowing this, he lifted the limp form of Kenekuk in his arms, and uttering a peculiar cry, ran swiftly down the valley, followed by his surviving braves. When safe around the turn and beyond the reach of the vicious whistling bullets, the white chief gently lowered his burden to the ground, and with a face strangely anxious for one of his heartless reputation, examined the young warrior's injuries.

A pistol-bullet had plowed its way through the young brave's cheek, inflicting a wound more painful than dangerous. In addition he bore wounds in shoulder and breast, besides sundry severe bruises received in falling down the sloping rocks. Not until he had satisfied himself that these injuries, though troublesome, were not likely to endanger his son's life, did the White Sioux have thoughts for aught else. He gave a few hurried directions to his braves. They were to keep close watch upon the whites, and hold themselves in readiness for a charge, should they endeavor to force their way to the camp, or to take advantage of their position.

Then, aided by an old, battle-scarred warrior, he washed and bandaged the wounds of his son, who speedily recovered his consciousness under their treatment.

When this was accomplished, the White Sioux for the first time realized how heavy had been his loss during that brief charge and stubborn assault. Thirteen of his men had fallen, besides the scout who was slain by Comstock. And he seemed as far as ever from accomplishing his purpose.

Passing around the turn, he paused within full view of the stone fort. Leaning back against the rocks, he studied every point of the enemy's position, a dark frown corrugating his brow. But then the shadows began to lessen, and a hard misty veil arose over his features, as he abandoned his position and returned to where the majority of his braves were waiting.

"The white faces are laughing now, but they will weep blood before the sun is over their heads. Their retreat is a trap; we will show them how to spring it. There is danger, but danger is the food of the Sioux. Listen, and I will show my children how they can pick up the scalps of the white horse-stealers."

Inte engers ears the White Sioux poured the bold and dangerous plan, but formed himself engaged in inspecting the stone fort. As a ready stated the ledge upon which the whites had sought refuge, somewhat resembled the sloping cut made by a skillful woodsman in felling a tree, with an important exception.

The wall of rock which formed the back did slope forward, as it rose above the ledge, but a line dropped from its outermost point would strike the shelf several feet inside of the barricade. After rising almost perpendicularly from this point for several rods the line grew broken and irregular, full of crevices and as crevices as it sloped back to the rock.

The White Sioux believed he could station marksmen upon several of these points, from which they could fire down upon the defenders of the stone fort, as long as any of them remained near the barricade. Of course, by retreating to the rear wall the defenders would be safe from the enemy above, but by doing so they could no longer command the foot of the range, nor full fifty yards of the level ground. A swift charge would speedily carry the assailants within this line, when the whites could only fire upon them, or resist their ascent by coming within range of the marksmen overhead.

It was a cunning plan, and only for the peremptory command of the White Sioux would have been hailed with wild yells of satisfaction by his dusky advisers. The chief selected six braves for the enterprise, giving them a brief but clear explanation of the signals by which he would govern their movements. Their weapons were a brace of revolvers each and stout rawhide lassos. Thus equipped the six braves ran swiftly toward the mouth of the valley until at a point where the ridge could be crossed with comparative ease and at the same time beyond view from the pale-faces' position.

Half an hour of arduous work carried them to the crest of the ridge directly back of the stone fort, and then began the real labor, where, but for their ropes, and through confidence in each other, the enterprise must have failed. With a lasso firmly secured beneath his arms, a young Sioux led the way, crawling from point to point, where a mountain goat could barely have stood, or lowered cautiously by the strong ropes of his comrades above. When at a favorable point he would release the lasso and await the coming of a second brave, while the Sioux who brought up the rear would secure his lasso to a rock and descend by its aid, leaving the rope when it could no longer be used.

In this manner the adventurers slowly but surely neared the goal, guided and encouraged by the silent signals of their chief, who watched their progress from a point beyond the sight of the unsuspecting pale-faces below. An occasional glimpse of his form was visible, as he moved without the knowledge that his approving eye was upon them; it may well be doubted whether the Sioux, brave though they were, would have persisted in the attempt, so rapidly did the dangers increase. The footing grew more and more precarious, the rocks seeming frost-again and splintered, threatening to fall at the slightest touch, and when within a lasso's length of the points from whence alone they could hope to gain a view of those beneath, the six braves gathered together for the purpose of consultation.

It was evident to all that the points of rock overhanging the ledge would not bear the weight of a man, even with the utmost caution, much less with the sudden movements he would have to use in order to avoid being picked off from the ledge after diving upon the wiles. Blindly obedient to their chief though they were, it was not an Indian nature to sacrifice his life without even a hope of striking a return blow.

Knowing that the chief was watching them, one of the braves knotted the rope around his body and was slowly lowered toward the advanced rocks. For a moment he hung just above them, peering keenly down, then motioned his comrades to draw him up again. Fearing to speak there, he signed for them to crawl further up, finally revealing the discovery he had made.

A single man, supported by a rope, in trusty hands, could easily destroy the barricade below by simply pushing over the huge masses of shattered rock, but in no other manner could the whites be molested from above, except at the cost of certain death to the adventurer.

The chief must at once be informed of the alteration necessarily made in the programme, so he could play his part accordingly.

The sure-footed brave volunteered to carry the tidings, and after agreeing upon certain signals by means of which he could at once inform the other warriors of the decision, he began the toilsome ascent.

From his look-out the White Sioux saw that



THE VILLAGE DEACON.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

In Church.
He shuts the church door, slow and sure,
And somewhat in a manner solemn,
As if to shut all sin without,
And up the aisle walks in a column.
He takes the corner of his pew
Which never can be filled by proxy,
He'd no more have a stranger there
Than new views in his orthodoxy.
He's had that seat for twenty years,
And worn out several pairs of cushions;
A stranger on the other end
Would interfere with his devotions.
The Sunday outside of his face
You see is most serenely frigid;
He always sits down with "ahem,"
A rule he sticks to very rigid.
He always coughs and starts the tunes,
And sings ahead for sake of leading,
And then blows his devotional nose
As satisfied with the proceeding.
The parson pictures torments dire
Far far below his spoken people,
And as he sees them going down,
His amens rise up to the steeple.
The hopeless bale of sinful man
When he shall call on rocks to grind him
The parson paints; the deacon groans
And quite wakes up the man behind him.
"But oh, the righteous shall find peace
And dwell in valleys growing greenly!"
He rubs the world's dust off his sleeve,
And then he strokes his beard serenely.
"Woe to the sinner in his way!"
The deacon sternly looks around him;
The slumbers of the good are sweet,
And soon we see that sleep has bound him.
The closing exhortation wakes
The deacon to take up collection;
The business-jangling penny makes
Sad havoc with his soul's reflection.
He leaves the church with stately step;
His cloak is on, and deftly covers;
He puts his hat on in the porch
And a few furtive glances suffers.
The inner life hath fed on thoughts
That make his heart of peate the winner;
The inner man, too, must be fed,
And so, his thoughts are fixed on dinner.

Out of Church.
When out the deacon drives a trade
With very rare discrimination,
And people say he's thriving well
All on his Christian reputation.
"He said the groceries which he does
Are not beyond himself in purity;
And then, he lends unto the poor—
At twelve per cent., and good security.
His week-day ritual is quite strong,
And little of the Sabbath fingers;
His dealings with the world are warm,
And people sometimes burn their fingers.
And neighbors round about him say
He'd be a model man on Monday
If, in the morning he'd put on
The suit of clothes he wears on Sunday.

Post and Plain;

Rifle and Revolver in the Buffalo Range.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

VI.

AFTER THE HUNT.

"That makes jest twenty-nine head," said Old Mart, thoughtfully, as he wiped out his long rifle and surveyed the old bull. "I've seen the time, and I'm 'most 'shamed to tell it, too, Launce, when I've counted nigh on two hundred buffalo in a day killed from one stand by a feller I knowed."
"Where was that?" I asked.
"Down in the South Buffalo Range," he answered, "close to the pan-handle of Texas, in '73. They used to go out in parties, one to shoot, two to skin and one to cook, and by gosh, sir, the poor buffalo had no peace of their lives. There wasn't a water-hole but had its party camped nigh it, and not a hide nor hoof could get to that water without gettin' shot. Man, dear, the very rivers were lined with the durned skunks, keepin' the poor critters from drinkin'."
"And what was the end of it?" I asked.
"The end was that, in '74, in places whar ye used to see the hull country black with herds it was white with skulls and bones, and to-day they've druv 'em all off for good."
"Then why didn't the government stop it?" I innocently demanded.
"Old Mart laughed bitterly.
"Did ye ever know government stop a bad deed or help a good one, Launce? Not in this country. No, the buffalo's goin', and in ten years more there won't be any. It's no use fur me to spare 'em. Some one else will kill 'em if we don't, so we must as well hev some fun—hey, Launce!"
He was interrupted by the appearance of a train of lumbering, creaking wagons coming from the direction of the fort, attended by a guard of soldiers.
"Reckon they'll have plenty of fresh meat to last till nigh Christmas," said Mart, as he eyed the wagons. They won't waste much of those caridges, Launce. They're not, sweet and clear, in the south-west.
"That's the boys," explained Mart. "They had a tooter along with them. Thar lookin' for camp. Out off your own tails, Launce, so nobody else kin claim 'em, for greenies at a buffalo-hunt is the meanest cusses to steal I ever seen."
As he spoke a second bugle sounded from the head of the coming wagon-train, and I reflected that if I wanted to secure my trophies I had better do so. Mart lent me his big butcher-knife, and I quickly accomplished my task, coming out richer by five buffalo-tails than when I left the fort in the morning. I confess, however, that I felt prouder of the old bull that had cost me such a severe chase than of any of the rest. I had killed him like a sportsman kills, while I felt that the butcher-knife was most fit for the others.
Old Mart went round to the carcasses and had his bunch of five tails dangling by the tufts as the wagon-train came up.
"Let them carry the traps home, Launce," he said, dryly, as he took up his gun to move away. "Sojers is paid to do that kind of work. Me and you don't do it."
The old man had all the mixture of dislike and contempt felt by the average American mechanic for the common soldier, and yet it seemed to me that there was no occasion for the feeling. The men who came up were civil-spoken, intelligent-looking fellows enough, and when I pointed out the trail of my horse coming from where I had left my own dead buffalo, the sergeant told me not to trouble myself, that the meat should be recovered.
"Now, then, for the fort," cried Mart, and we set off for our walk over the frozen plain, following the back trail of the wagons.
Very soon we had topped one of the many imperceptible swells, and the wagons vanished from sight, when we again found ourselves apparently alone on the plain.
Not quite alone, however, as Mart soon pointed out. I saw something flit over the top of a swell in the neighborhood, and asked what it was. It was gone before I could see it fairly.
"Reckon a wolf," answered Mart, gruffly. "Thar's lots on 'em sneakin' round now. They smells the offal. The boys'll be fur runnin' 'em to-morrow, I reckon. Prime sport, Launce."
"What's prime sport?" I demanded.
"Why, runnin' wolves, in course! They does it at all the posts now, to keep themselves awake."
As he spoke, I saw a dark crack in the plain ahead of us, one of the numerous ravines that seem the landscape in the West.
"Bet thar's a dozen wolves in thar, waitin'," averred Old Mart, grinning.
We passed quietly on till we came to the ra-

vine, a seam about six feet deep at the head, but getting deeper as it advanced. Sure enough, there was a grand scurrying down below, and we saw the wolves running away like so many ewes.

Old Mart pitched his rifle to his shoulder, and sent a bullet flying after them, which elicited a shrill yell but no dead wolf.
"Durn the brutes," he said, shaking his fist at them. "They've stole too many of my brother-in-law's sheep for me to let 'em go. I hates every hide and hair of 'em."
It was the first time I had ever heard Old Mart Sykes mention himself or his belongings in any way, and I inquired:

"Where does your brother-in-law live, Mart?"
"He's a sheep-farmer down Kansas way, and I spent one season with him, 'bout four years ago. That's how I cum to know 'bout the plains. The cussed wolves would plague them sheep nigh to death—the varmints!—and we used to set up nights watchin' fur 'em, till I tho't my ha'r would turn gray. I lowed to love Mirandy Jane better'n any of my brothers 'n sisters, but I couldn't stand it forever, and as fur Lige—that's my brother-in-law, 'Lijah Horton he was—as fur Lige, he was a-growin' poorer all the time. Howsunder, we fixed 'em at last."
"How did you do it, Mart?"
"We made a bee of all the neighbors and a grand surround, and we counted nigh on twelve thousand wolves' heads that year, in Simmons county, alone. I tell you wolves was thick thar."

"I should say so, Mart."
"But that wasn't nothin' to the time when they began to pay bounties for wolf-scalps. They bust the treasury of Kansas and hed to suspend payment. There was seven million scalps brought in, one week."
The old hunter turned and looked me solemnly in the face as he told this tremendous lie, and he never blinked.
"And how much did they pay for each scalp, Mart?"
"Two dollars and a half," said Mr. Sykes, promptly.
"Then that was seventeen and a half million dollars paid out in one week for wolves?"
"Jest the ticket, Launce! It's a fine thing to be dedicated—ain't it?"

"No wonder the treasury was bankrupt," was my only comment on the story, and I plodded on in silence.
The old man watched me furtively for a moment, and then said, in the same grave tone:
"But, the State didn't lose any money, arter all."
"Ah! how was that?" I asked, with an appearance of great interest, to see how the old fellow would answer.
"Well, ye see, all the wolf-hunters bein' flush of money, got on a bust—"

"Hold on, Mart. How many were there to share the money?"
"Wall, reckon 'bout a hundred."
"And each of them had a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars?"
"No," protested Mart, soberly. "I wouldn't tell a lie to ye, Launce. They didn't hev more'n 'bout a hundred apiece."
"Then they only killed twenty-five hundred wolves, Mart?"
The old hunter scratched his head with a comical look.

"Do you make it that, Launce?" he demanded.
"Certainly. Hundred men at a hundred dollars, ten thousand. Wolves, two dollars and a half apiece makes twenty-five hundred wolves." "Reckon you're right," admitted Mart, coolly; "but I allers makes it out seven million. Howsunder, every man o' 'em got on a bust and it all went back to the State, for the gov'nor was interested in the best barrooms in 'Tepka, whar they paid the money. Thar's old Nap, at last, I s'wore!"
He broke off to point at the fort, which lay right in front of us by the banks of the broad Missouri.

The lately turbid and rushing river lay white and silent before us, locked up for the winter. The frosty night had consolidated the floating ice, and the old ferry-boat had been hauled up the bank, while the rope no longer sagged in the water.
"I won't be safe to cross till to-morrow," remarked Mart, as he looked at the river. "Arter that the sleighs will be runnin' all the time. Hark! hyar's the boys back."

I became aware of a great crackling and tramping on the snow, some distance behind us, and we heard a cheery shout.
We looked back. The mounted buffalo-hunters were coming gayly toward the fort, headed by the Indian scouts, yelling and galloping to and fro, as they waved their trophies in the air. At the head of all was little Charley Green, flourishing a buffalo tail, and to all appearance frantic with joy. He came dashing up at full speed and screamed out:
"Hooray, Launce! I've fixed him. I've killed a bull!"
Charley was so proud of his feat that I had no heart to mortify him, and so listened attentively to his story of how he had picked out the bull all by himself and followed it till it dropped, firing twelve shots before he killed his game. At last he asked:

"How many did you kill, Launce?"
I showed him the bunch of tails.
"Five?"
Charley stared and his face fell. Then he turned.
"How many for you, Mart?"
"Twenty-five, 'twixt me and Jack Moore," said the hunter, soberly. "We mout hev hed forty, of we'd waited."
Charley whistled as he surveyed the great bunch of tails Mart showed him.
"Why, that's more than one whole party have got," he cried. "We had eleven hunters and only killed seventeen buffaloes."

"I told ye we'd beat ye," grinned old Mart. "Runnin' buffaloes good for sport, but a stand hunt's the thing for meat. How many did Cap Bullard kill?"
"He'll tell you himself," replied Charley, somewhat taken down in his enthusiasm by that count of tails.
(To be continued—commenced in No. 413.)

TIME'S MOODS.

BY ANNIE WITTON.

Oh, there are times when Heaven's sweet power Asserts o'er us its holy sway;
And at such moments—such an hour,
We can do naught but kneel and pray.
Love grasps the helm and turns our bark
As sweetly as a mother fond
Would lead her babe, till every chord
Within our erring hearts respond.

Oh, there are times when earth assumes The aspect God would have it wear
To human sight; and Heaven illumines The spirit's dream of mansions fair.
Our tenured nature looses their hold
As Heaven seems nearer and more near,
Our freighted bosoms grow more bold
Till trust has murdered every fear.

Oh, there are times we would not touch A single fly to give it pain;
And then, again, the orphan's tear Would not avail, but plead in vain.
For man is such a strange compound
Of good and ill, alas! one day
The summer sunshine lights his soul,
The next, cold winter holds full sway.

The Silent Witness.

BY C. D. CLARK.

It was a dark spot in the midst of the silent wood, a spot designed by nature for the plotting of a dark deed or its accomplishment. At the roots of a gnarled and knotted old tree two men stood in close conference. In this dark spot they deemed themselves entirely safe from eavesdroppers, and yet at times they started and looked about them, as if their plot were so hideous that the birds might whisper it.
One of the two was a ruffian, ready for any deed, no matter how base or cruel it might be—a dark-visaged, iron-jawed scoundrel, with a small, savage eye and a hang-dog air in keeping with his general appearance—a villain, and a villain whom the world had not used well.
His companion seemed out of place with such a man—a tall, handsome person, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and having all the easy grace of a man of the world, yet there was a



"We are safe here," said this man, laying his hand upon the broad breast of his companion.

nameless something in his manner which spoke of some evil known to him, perhaps some evil shared by him.

"We are safe here, Bill," said this man, laying his hand upon the broad breast of his ruffianly companion. "There is no danger of our being overheard."

"No," growled the villain. "There ain't no one nigh, as I knows you. They don't like to hanker round Bill Bruff's ranch too much, specially if they are spies. I don't vally a man's life a pin's worth if he stands in my way."

"And what would you do if there was money in it, Bill?" demanded the other, in a hissing whisper.

"I like money, Master Harry," answered Bruff. "You know that—none so well as you, for you've used me afore now on the strength of it. Why the deuce don't you speak out? If there's work to do I'm the man to do it, if you make the pay enough."

"I thought I knew you, Bill. Listen, then; there is a man in my way, Bill—a man I hate. I hate the devil—a man I'd give a thousand dollars to see lying dead at my feet."

"Then why don't you lay him there? You used to be game enough."
"I can't slow in it, Bill. If it were a man I could insult and then call out and shoot like a dog it would be all right. But I can't do it, Bill, and when you know the name you'll understand it. Bend closer."

Bill Bruff stooped, and the man whispered in his ear. Villain, hardened to the heart's core, yet Bruff started back with a cry of surprise.
"Hum! I didn't think it was in any man's heart to turn against one with the same blood in his veins. But it don't matter to me, I s'pose."

"You, at least, have no cause to love him."
"You know that when you came for me, didn't you, Master Harry? Well, so be it, then; name your price and I'll say yes or no to it."
"You shall have a thousand dollars; as I said."

"Enough; I'll do it. I've done as bad for half the money, and yet when I think how much he's done for you—"

"How much! When he is rolling in money, and does it out to me as if it were charity! But it isn't that so much; there's something more than money in it."

"What's that?" demanded Bill, drawing a pistol, and leaping into the bushes like a panther, while his companion drew back into the shadow of the tree with a low cry. He heard Bill Bruff beating to and fro through the bushes, but at last he came back with a heavy revolver in his hand, and with a heavy declaration, "but I reckon it was the wind."

"Where will he be to-night?"
He rides from the Edgeworth plantation through Wolf Gap after nightfall. That's your time and place."

"I'll be there," replied the man, with a dark look, "and my hand has forgotten its cunning if he lives to trouble you after that. I carry the mark of his whip upon my face yet, and when I hear his name I can feel it burn and throb. I'd have done it for half the money."

"Then, good-day to you; and when all is over, and the king has his own again, come to me and I'll double the money. By the way, where's Alice?"
"No matter. She's a good girl, is my Alice; too good for such a father. And let me tell you, once for all, that the man that does her wrong, I don't care who he is, I'll kill him like a dog."

The tempter gave him an uneasy look and turned away, while Bill stood looking after him with a moody face.
"If I thought the dog had it in his heart to harm Alice," muttered the hardy villain. "I'd cut his throat before he was out of these woods. But, pshaw! he means well enough."

He turned on his heel and made his way through a narrow tangled path to an opening in the woods, in which stood a rude log cabin. Yet, in spite of its dismal situation, some attempt had been made to render it attractive. The open space in front was laid out as a garden, and in the little beds bloomed many flowers which had been tended with patient care; and as Bill came brushing through the underbrush a slight girl, with the face of an angel and eyes of heaven's own azure, sprung suddenly out of the open door and threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, father!" she cried. "You will not do it; you will not! If Harry Eaton hates his brother, if he plots against him because their father loved Alfred best and would not trust a dissipated gambler—"

"Death, girl!" he cried. "what do you mean! You are raving, mad. What have you heard! what do you know! There, there, Alice; get supper, and say no more, for you do not know what you are talking about."
"Father," continued the girl, lifting her earnest eyes to his, "I have heard you say before now that you loved me. When I have heard men speak hard of you, I have defended you. But, what I heard Harry Eaton say—"

Bill Bruff caught her by the arm, dragged her into the cabin, and pushed her into a seat.
"Let me hear no more of your ravings, my girl," he said, in a snarly tone. "I have always loved you, and I'd lay down my life for you any day, but I'll not bear your insults."

"It is because Norah Edgeworth loves Alfred best that he seeks his life."
"Norah Edgeworth has taught you to hate your father and to insult him to his face," cried Bruff. "You have spied upon me, and now take the consequences."

He dragged her into a small room at the back of the house, hurled her in angrily, and closed and locked the door. Then, hurrying out, he brought a horse from a low shed behind the house, flung himself into the saddle, and rode furiously away.

It was a time and in a section of Kentucky in which the law had little force. Men did des-

per, only to find a lodgment in the bosom of the girl.

"Father, you have killed me!" cried the girl. "You have killed your Alice."
The man gave a terrible cry, like that of a wild beast brought to bay, and springing forward, regardless of all else, he caught the wounded girl in his arms. But she was dying; the coral lips were fast taking on the ashy hue of death.

"I forgive you," she gasped. "You did not mean the shot for me, and I have saved Alfred's life. Lift me gently, father. I am going to my mother."

A fluttering sigh, and the spirit of the lovely girl had fled forever.

Bill Bruff laid her gently down, and catching up his revolver, he turned suddenly upon Harry Eaton.

"You found?" he cried. "You brought this upon me?"

Both fired together. Harry threw up his arms and fell from the saddle, dead before he touched the ground. Bill Bruff stood like a statue, his hand still extended, and then sunk slowly down. By this time Alfred was on his feet, and a weapon in his hand.

"Don't shoot," said Bill, faintly. "I've got my ticket—that man has killed me to kill you, but she heard us plotting, and came to save you. She was the only thing I loved on earth, and now she's gone! I'm glad I'm booked through. One thing you may say, Bill Bruff died game."

A shudder passed through his frame and he was dead. Alfred turned and looked at his brother, and saw him lying dead, with the look of malicious hatred frozen on his face.

There was no mourning for Harry Eaton and Bill Bruff, but when Alice was laid to rest they knew that no purer spirit ever passed through the Beautiful Gates.

Ripples.

The average female dresses for her lover or her husband, the girl for her rivals; but only the true woman for herself.

STONEWALL JACKSON held that three kinds of courage prevail among soldiers in battle, based respectively on insensibility, pride, duty.

"FLOUR," says a Chicago exchange, "has declined one dollar." It requires a good deal of moral courage to decline a dollar in these times.

A DRUNKEN legislator said that he was a self-made man. "That fact," said Mr. Greeley, "relieves the Almighty of a great responsibility."

The German woman is covered, the Englishwoman clothed, the Frenchwoman dressed; fashions are created in Paris, copied in France, and run into the ground abroad.

A BOY who borrowed a dictionary to read, returned it after he got through, with the remark, "It was very good, but it is some how changed the subject very often."

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS discovered America, and now is in turn discovered. His skeleton was found the other day and the first thing done was to photograph his remains. To judge from the photograph, Christopher was a handsome man.

At twenty you know everything; at thirty you have your doubts; at forty there are some things you don't know; at fifty you are only sure of your ignorance, and after that you read Mr. Beecher's sermon on everlasting punishment and hope he is right.

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The Saturday Journal is Published Weekly at the following rates:

For one year	\$1.00
For two years	2.00
Two copies for one year	5.00
Single copies	6c.

Supplied by all newsdealers.
BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
86 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.